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STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT AS MEANS OF CONFLICT PREVENTION: PAKISTAN'S DEFENCEDIPLOMACY TOWARDS RUSSIA

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Abstract

In post-Cold War era, defence diplomacy as strategic engagement focuses on a state's military and defence institutions for a peaceful, non-coercive role to build amicable and cooperative relations with former or potential rivals to prevent and resolve conflicts. This research article argues that Pakistan's defence diplomacy towards Russia, a former Cold War adversary, has been geared towards reducing hostility and sources of friction to promote and achieve broader foreign policy objectives of Islamabad. It analyzes strategic engagement between Islamabad and Moscow in four categories of defence diplomatic activities: defence agreements, high level exchanges, joint military exercises and port calls. The article concludes that Pakistan's defence diplomatic efforts (2014-2020) have produced political and strategic-level benefits to prevent conflict and reduce hostility with Russia.

Keywords: Counterterrorism, Defence cooperation, Joint Military Exercises, Military diplomacy, Port calls.

Introduction

Since the turn to the 21st Century, Pakistan's growing security and defence relationship with Russia is a key example of Islamabad's defence diplomacy towards a former Cold War adversary. The bipolar structure of Cold War, in which Soviet Union was a close ally of India, left Pakistan to

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become the "most allied ally" of United States of America in Asia. This strategic configuration straitjacketed Pakistan-Soviet Union bilateral ties for decades. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 compelled Pakistan to resist the potentially expansionist design of the Soviets towards the 'Hot Waters' of Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean by joining hands with the US and Saudi Arabia in sponsoring and arming Mujahedeen fighting the Red Army in Afghanistan.[1] Moscow and Islamabad occasionally engaged in covert proxy war on each other's territory. While the Soviets tried to exploit ethnic schisms and chasms in Pakistan, Islamabad also conducted clandestine operations inside Soviet Union.[2] After the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in the year 1989 and the subsequent fall of their client communist regime of President Najibullah, Moscow did its utmost to prevent emergence of a Pakistan-backed Mujahideen regime in Kabul. As Pakistan wanted Hiz-e-Islami Afghanistan Head, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to be the ruler of Afghanistan, Moscow started supporting the anti-Hekmatyar Mujahideen factions, like Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan leaders including Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Massoud. When in 1994 Taliban emerged in Afghanistan, Pakistan started supporting the militants considering them as potential stabilizing element in Afghanistan, which could also give Pakistan support from its Western neigbour in its longstanding rivalry with its Eastern neighbor, India. In this scenario, Moscow calculating that Taliban ruled Afghanistan would become a potential exporter of 'radical Islamist' ideology to neighbouring Muslim Central Asian States, once part of Soviet Union (1917-1991), strongly backed the anti-Taliban United Front (Northern Alliance) in Afghanistan in collaboration with India and Iran. Russia saw Pakistan's backing of Taliban —and by extension their Chechen and Uzbek affiliates—as evidence of its ability to threaten the security of Russia's southern flank. As a result, Pakistan's interests continued to diverge with those of Russia's interests in the 1990s.[3]Despite the turbulent history, the evolving geo-political configuration of the region in post 9/11 era, the visibly interminable Afghan conflict, Russo-American intensified rivalry in post-Crimea period, and the US increasing pressure on Islamabad to toe its line even at the altar of its key national interest in South Asian region have pushed Pakistan and Russia to revisit their strategic ties. Consequently, both states have developed an

[1]Tahir Amin, "Pakistan-Russia Relations and the Unfolding "New Great Game" in South Asia," in *The Regional Security Puzzle around Afghanistan: Bordering Practices in Central Asia and Beyond*, ed. Helena Rytövuori-Apunen (Opladon: Barbara Budrich, 2016), 194-196.

[2]Nikolas K. Gvosdev & Christopher Marsh, *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors* (London: CQ Press, 2013), 338.

[3] Kurita Masahiro, "Pakistan-Russia Relations: Developments and Limitations," The National Institute of Defence Studies, NIDS Commentary No.85(April 2019): 1-2.

understanding to start a new era of closer cooperation and support on all issues concerning their respective interests in the South Asian and Central Asian regions particularly war-torn Afghanistan.[4] In this backdrop, Pakistan has had used defence diplomacy as a tool of foreign and security policy to develop and build cooperative ties with Russia. Defence and intelligence cooperation between Pakistan and Russia began in post 9/11 era, has had steadily increased, widened since 2011 and significantly gained momentum after the conclusion of bilateral Defence Cooperation Accord of 2014.[5]This article analyzes strategic engagement between Pakistan and Russia (2014-2020) to respond effectively to security challenges in South and Central Asia.

Development of Pakistan- Russia Defence Ties (2001-2013)

The attacks of September 11, 2001, on the US mainland transformed the geo-political landscape of South Asia with new strategic shifts shaping the contours of Pakistan's security dynamics. In the changing political configuration of the region, Pakistan too began to re-engineer its relations with Russia. In 2002, a Joint Working Group (JWG) on 'Counterterrorism and other New Challenges to International Security' was established which paved the way for normalizing the mutual ties. In 2003, General Pervez Musharraf during his visit to Moscow promised to share collected information about Chechen separatists and other militants operating in Russia and Central Asia.[6]In 2007, Russian Prime Minister, Mikhail Fradkov visited Pakistan and discussed the prospects of economic and security cooperation. In late 2008, Russia gave Ukraine a green light to sell Pakistan four IL-78 refueling aircraft.[7]In 2009, Moscow remained unhesitant in Islamabad's purchase of Chinese JF-17 fighter jets, powered by Russian RD-93 engines.[8] In the same year, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, paid his first official visit to Russia. This visit helped to further build confidence and paved the way for a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and the then Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev in 2010. The next year in May 2011, Colonel General Alexander Postnikov, Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Russian Ground Forces visited Pakistan. In October 2012, General Kayani visited Moscow

[4] Shabir Ahmad Khan & Muhammad Khan, "Pakistan-Russia collaboration: Implications for Afghanistan and Central Asia," *Central Asia Journal*, No. 84 (Summer 2019): 2-3.

[5] Muhammad NawazKhan, "Pakistan-Russia Relations Redux: From Estrangement to Pragmatism," *IPRI Journal* 19(1) (2019):56-85.

[6] Gvosdev and Marsh, 341.

[7] Naveed Ahmad, "Russia's Pakistan Volte-Face," Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, (January 7, 2015), accessed August 7, 2018. https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13117-russias-pakistan-volte-face.html.

[8]Gvosdev and Marsh, 342.

and held a meeting with C-in-C of Russian Ground Forces, Colonel General Vladimir Chirkin. General Kayani discussed the possibility of military-to-military exchanges and purchase of Russian military hardware including Mi-17 helicopters.[9] In August 2013, General Chirkin paid a follow up visit and discussed on improving defence cooperation and the security situation in South Asia, especially Pakistan-Russia cooperation to restore peace in post-2014 Afghanistan.[10] Indeed, General Kayani was successful to transform his personal rapport into purposeful and persistent linkages between Islamabad and Moscow. These initial exchanges fostered greater understanding among Islamabad and Moscow for furtherance of regional and international security.

Conceptual Framework: Defence Diplomacy

The concept of defence diplomacy is used to analyze the burgeoning relations between Pakistan and Russia. Defence diplomacy's origin is rooted in the classic military diplomacy since the very geneses of nations when armed forces were employed to support states' foreign policy objectives. During Cold War, military diplomacy was traditionally used for deterrence and balance of power purposes to strengthen Western allies against Soviet Bloc states. But the post-Cold War environment witnessed an enlarged role of the Western defence establishments in promoting the foreign and security policy of their governments to help Central and Eastern European (CEE) States towards democratization and post conflict peace building. The military personnel of NATO became increasingly involved in many programmes including military training and education, joint military exercises, policy and planning to assist defence reforms in CEE states.[11] Since the late 1990s, several NATO member States, the US, China, India, Australia, New Zealand, and Southeast Asian Nations have included wider foreign policy and security goals such as preventing conflict and addressing traditional and non-traditional security issues in the ambit of military diplomacy. This new construction of military diplomacy gained prominence as defence diplomacy.[12]

Cottey and Forster in their seminal work on defence diplomacy note that defence diplomacy involves "the peacetime cooperative use of armed forces and related infrastructure (primarily defence ministries) as a tool of foreign and security policy." They argue that defence diplomacy in the post-Cold War era is being used not only to strengthen defence capabilities of

[9] *Business Recorder*, (October 4, 2012).
[10] *Pakistan Today*, (August 5, 2013).
[11] Tarak Barkawi, "Defence Diplomacy in North-South Relations," *International Journal*, (Summer 2011): 597-612.
[12] Gregory Winger, "The Velvet Gauntlet: A Theory of Defense Diplomacy," in *What do Ideas Do*?, ed. Agata Lisiak and Natalie Smolenski (Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellow's Conference Proceedings, 2014): 2-3.

partners and potential allies but also to build sustainable cooperative relations with former or potential foes through a wide range of activities. This process is described as strategic engagement. Within this framework, defence diplomacy as strategic engagement is recognized by Cottey and Forster as an effective instrument in prevention, management and resolution of conflict by working towards changing perceptions and attitudes of partner state's militaries, introducing transparency in defence relations, offering reassurances about intentions, building perceptions of common interests, supporting confidence-building measures to overcome differences, upholding political commitments, and encouraging partner state for broader cooperation. The defence diplomacy activities to accomplish these outcomes include the appointment of defence attachés, defence cooperation agreements, contacts between senior military and defence officials, joint military exercises, training and education, port calls, peacekeeping operations and provision of military equipment.[13]

Pakistan – Russia defence ties neatly fit the framework of defence diplomacy developed by Cottey and Forster. Russia is identified in this article as a former foe during Cold War and post-Cold War period. However, in recent years, Pakistan has used defence diplomacy as a means of strategic engagement to reduce sources of friction, building trust and confidence, thereby preventing conflict and solving political differences.

Objectives of Pakistan's Defence Diplomacy

Based on Cottey and Forster's framework, Pakistan's defence diplomatic engagement with Russia operates on several levels to promote broad foreign and security objectives of Islamabad:

- Altering the perception of Russian armed forces regarding Pakistan as 'enemy state' to dispel Cold War hostility and develop a constructive and strong partnership. This is important as many of Russia's current mid- and high-ranking officials were involved in the Afghan conflict in the 1980s, and now demonstrate reluctance to deepen cooperation with Pakistan.[14]
- Offering reassurances to Moscow about Islamabad's intentions in the 'War on Terror' through defence diplomatic activities to build mutual trust for cooperating on international peace and security.
- Reinforcing perceptions of common interests between Islamabad and Moscow to collaborate on security challenges and to harmonize

[13] Andrew Cottey and Anthony Forster, *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance*, ed. International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper (365) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 6-16.

[14] Vladimir Moskalenko and Petr Topychkanov, "Russia and Pakistan: Shared Challenges and Common Opportunities," Carnegie Moscow Center (May 10, 2014): 11.

views on creating a cooperative regional framework based on international norms and regional connectivity.

- Developing defence and military capability with a focus on learning new skills from Russian military.
- Procurement of military equipment and defence industrial cooperation with Moscow.
- Building effective channels to cooperate to overcome political differences particularly with reference to peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan.
- Developing cooperation with Moscow in advancing maritime security and economic interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Developing broader cooperation with Russia in other areas such as cooperation in energy, trade and economic fields.

Pakistan-Russia Defence Diplomacy in Practice

Pakistan's defence diplomatic activities with Russia include (but not limited to) conclusion of defence agreement, high level exchanges, joint military exercises and port calls.

Pakistan-Russia Bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement

Cottey and Forster consider bilateral defence cooperation agreements as significant defence diplomacy tools to establish an institutional mechanism for advancing defence relationship between the states. Beginning in 2014, Pakistan accelerated its efforts to deepen defence cooperation with Russia which culminated in conclusion of a Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA). The agreement was signed during Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu's visit to Islamabad in November 2014. The visit came amid the drawdown of US-led NATO forces from Afghanistan by the end of December 2014 and reflected a growing understanding between Islamabad and Moscow to fill up the strategic vacuum created by US withdrawal. The then Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif described the agreement as a 'milestone', which "will translate this relationship in tangible terms and further strengthen military-to-military relations."[15] The Agreement sets the following strategic priorities:

- Information sharing on political and military matters
- Cooperation for promoting international security
- Strengthening of counter-terrorism efforts and arms control activities
- Bolstering military cooperation in various areas

[15]Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Pakistan, Russia Sign Landmark Defence Cooperation Agreement," *Dawn*, (November 21, 2014).

- Sharing experiences in peacekeeping operations[16]

The agreement focuses to enhance traditional as well as nontraditional military and defence capabilities. Both the states could also engage in production of defence equipment through joint ventures.[17] Commenting on the Agreement, Sergei Shoigu said that it would have "a great practical focus and contribute to increasing combat efficiency of armed forces" and its implementation "would bolster other aspects of bilateral cooperation."[18] Agreeing with him, a Military Official noted that the Agreement has transformed Pakistan's regional security architecture and Islamabad is better able to play a key role in the region. Both the states were more likely to align their Afghanistan policies to support a political solution of the conflict by engaging Afghan Taliban in peace negotiations, coordinate counterterrorism strategies in the region and engage in arms trade which will not only strengthen defence partnership but also expand cooperation in other areas.[19]

1. High Level Exchanges

Pakistan's defence and military officials regularly interact with their Russian counterparts through high level visits and meetings to advance Pakistan's foreign policy objectives.

High Level Visits and Meetings: High-level exchanges provide Pakistan with opportunities to secure Russian military equipment. In June 2015, a deal for the purchase of Mi-35M Russian assault helicopters, was reported to have been reached during General Raheel Sharif's visit to Moscow. Subsequently, the agreement to purchase four Mi-35M helicopters was signed at Rawalpindi in August 2015 and Islamabad received the four helicopters in August 2017.[20]It was Pakistan's first weapon purchase from Russia, suggesting that Pakistan seeks to expand its military acquisition beyond America and China. Nevertheless, Moscow's sales of the S-400 system to New Delhi has irked Islamabad, and India is upset that Russia is

[16] Ibid.

[17] Sudha Ramachandran, "New Era in Russia-Pakistan Relations?" *The Diplomat*, (December 3, 2014), accessed March 17, 2016, https://thediplomat.com/2014/12/new-era-in-russia-pakistan-relations/.

[18]Syed,"Pakistan, Russia Sign."

[19]Interview with a Military Official ,(October 26, 2018).

[20] Franz-Stefan Gady, "Pakistan Begins Receiving Advanced Attack Helicopters from Russia," *The Diplomat*, (April 12, 2018), accessed May 3, 2018. https://thediplomat.com/2018/04/pakistan-begins-receiving-advanced-attack-helicopters-from-russia/.

building defense relations with its nemesis Pakistan, which India seeks to isolate internationally.[21]

Military contacts are also considered as important tool to inform and influence Russia's military opinion about Pakistan's policy in the 'War on Terror.' A case in point is Russian military delegation's visit to North Waziristan on 30 March 2017. The delegation was briefed about Pakistan's army Operation Zarb-e-Azb to clear the region from terrorists; Pakistan's efforts to strengthen security along Pak-Afghan border and to promote socio-economic development of the region. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) reportedly said that "the delegation acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's achievements in the fight against terrorism and efforts to bring stability in the region."[22] This suggests that military to military contacts promote greater transparency in defence relations and build trust that Islamabad is committed to defeat the forces of extremism and terrorism and contribute to international peace and security.

Pakistan's military leadership takes a broader view of Pakistan and Russia's defence engagement and calls attention to economic dimensions of the relationship as well. In April 2018, General Qamar Javed Bajwa during his visit to Russia stressed that Pakistan "will keep on working towards a cooperative regional framework based on sovereign equality and mutual progress through connectivity." He underscored that Islamabad "welcomes any initiative which can bring peace and stability in Afghanistan and the whole region will benefit from it." Appreciating his views, General Gerasimov said, "Russia supports Pakistan's efforts towards reconciliation and peace in Afghanistan and is willing to play a role towards that end."[23] In July 2019, General Bajwa during a meeting with C-in-C of Russian Ground Forces, Oleg Salyukov, reinforced this point that military cooperation between Pakistan and Russia will enhance peace and stability in the region and "usher economic prosperity." Salyukov also expressed his desire to strengthen relations of cooperation with Pakistan across a broad spectrum of areas.[24]

Russia-Pakistan Joint Military Consultative Committee (JMCC): The establishment of JMCC in 2018 paved the way for regular military consultation between defence officials of Russia and Pakistan to discuss military cooperation and deliberate upon Afghanistan peace process, counterterrorism and the Middle East situation.[25] The JMCC is usually co-

[21]Feroz Hassan Khan, "Russia–Pakistan Strategic Relations: An Emerging Entente Cordiale," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*4, No.1 (Special Issue 2021): 42-64.
[22]*Daily Times*, (March 31, 2017).
[23] F. Z. Khan, "Gen Bajwa's 'Significant' Visit to Russia," *Daily Times*, (May 10, 2018).
[24]*The Express Tribune*, (July 2, 2019).
[25]Sana Jamal, "Pakistan, Russia Expand Defence Cooperation," *Gulf News*, (August 8, 2018).

chaired by Russian Deputy Defence Minister and Pakistan's Defence Secretary and provides the "highest forum of defence collaboration" between the two states. The first meeting of JMCC was held in Rawalpindi, Pakistan in August 2018 and resulted in concluding an important Agreement for Russian military training of Pakistan's army officers. The Agreement came amid worsening relations between Pakistan and the US, which resulted in freezing of all US military training for Pakistani officers over differences on Afghanistan conflict. According to a Pakistan's defence analyst, training of Pakistani military service members at Russian military institutions "would bring about a major shift in the world view of top military officers" who were until now trained at US institutes.[26]In August 2019, the second session of JMCC was held in Moscow during which the forum hoped that JMCC "would continue to play a vital role in enhancing defence cooperation." [27]

Meetings at Multilateral Defence Forums: Pakistan's and Russian military and defence officials also interact through various multilateral forums.

Moscow Conference on International Security (MCIS): The annual Moscow Conference on International Security (MCIS), organized by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, provides an important venue for the two sides to held bilateral talks and informal discussions on the sidelines of the event. In April 2016, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, after meeting Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on the sidelines of 5th MCIS, stressed that constructive relations between Moscow and Islamabad were important for maintaining international security. In Sergei Shoigu assessment:

> "*We appreciate the achievements in military cooperation. Our meetings promoted growth of the number of contacts between the armed forces of Pakistan and Russia in many directions throughout the recent years*." [28]

The forum is also a platform to exchange Islamabad's views on regional and global security challenges. In April 2018, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan during his address at 7th MCIS highlighted the brutal repression of people by Indian army in Indian occupied Jammu &Kashmir and remarked: "Jammu & Kashmir dispute must be resolved in accordance with UN resolutions, taking into account the aspirations of the Kashmiris."

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[26]Ayaz Gul, "Pakistan, Russia Sign Rare Military Cooperation Pact," *Voice of America*, (August 8, 2018), accessed July 11, 2019. https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/pakistan-russia-sign-rare-military-cooperation-pact.

[27]*The Express Tribune*, (August 20, 2019).

[28]Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, "Heads of the Russian and Pakistani Military Departments had a Meeting within the Moscow Conference on International Security," (April 27, 2016), accessed March 2, 2019 https://eng.mil.ru/en/mcis/news/more.htm?id=12084071@egNews.

He expressed concerns over growing foothold of the Islamic State in Afghanistan and the use of drug money for financing of terrorism as Afghanistan sees exponential increase in poppy cultivation.[29] Experts note that these high-level exchanges and interactions amongst the leaders of the two states not only helped to fix the pre-existing misunderstandings but also proved to be the basis of future amicable Pakistan-Russia relations.[30]

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): Pakistan is keen on expanding its security and defence ties with Russia through SCO since Islamabad secured full membership of the block along with India at the Astana Summit in June 2017. The annual SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting provides a leading mechanism for Pakistan's Defence Minister to interact with his Russian counterpart on the sideline of the group with a focus on improving security and promoting economic cooperation in the SCO region. From Pakistan's perspective, Moscow can help Islamabad to further its strategic outreach in Central Asia given the significant influence Russia retains over CARs. In the long run, supporting China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) —a connecting point of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) would also contribute to Russia's Greater Eurasian Partnership.[31]Moreover, Pakistan's strategic community views that Islamabad-Moscow cooperation within SCO framework can deter New Delhi from taking any action likely to heighten tensions in the region.

Pakistan-Russia Joint Military Exercises

Military training and exercises constitute an important instrument of Pakistan's defence diplomacy and intend to benchmark Pakistan army's capabilities as well as learn new techniques from Russian military. Furthermore, joint exercises provide opportunities for both militaries to foster deeper comprehension of each other culture, change mutual perceptions from rival to supporter described as softening the "competitive mindsets" of the participating military personnel, directing "their energies from confrontation to cooperation."[32] Since 2014, Pakistan-Russia collaboration is growing in this domain. The militaries of both the states have participated in eight bilateral and five multilateral exercises during 2014-2020 [Table 1].

[29]*Times of Islamabad*, (April 4, 2018).

[30]Syed Muhammad Saad Zaidi & Adam Saud, "From "Geo-Strategic Rivals" to "Probable Allies"? A Constructivist Analysis of the Pakistan-Russia Relations."*Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences* 91(2) (2021): 153–162.

[31]Vladimir Morozov & Andrew Korybko, "Pakistan's role in Russia's Greater Eurasian Partnership," *Polis. Political Science*, no. 3 (2020): 9-22.

[32]Wilson Chun Hei Chau, "Explaining China's Participation in Bilateral and Multilateral Military Exercises," *Security Challenges* 7 (3), (Spring 2011): 57.

Pakistan and Russian naval personnel have exercised three times using the codename "Arabian Monsoon" in 2014, 2015 and 2018. The exercises have focused on conducting of combined operations to interdict activities of pirates and other organized criminal groups at sea, including cutting off the supply of narcotics in North Arabian Sea.[33] According to the Federal Drug Control Service of Russia, these exercises gave new impetus to the anti-drug cooperation between Islamabad and Moscow.[34]Since 2017, Russian Navy also participated in multilateral naval exercises Aman-17 and Aman-19 hosted by Pakistan since 2007 on biennial basis. Aman [Peace] exercises aim to refine the concept of 'collective and collaborative' security to keep the IOR stable by countering piracy, drug trafficking, human smuggling and terrorism.[35]Russian participation in the naval exercises was a confirmation that Moscow considers Islamabad a viable ally for the security of civilian, commercial and military targets in the IOR.

The Special Operations Forces of the two states have conducted five training exercises under the codename Druzhba [Friendship] in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Friendship exercises are conducted on annual basis alternately on Pakistani and Russian territory and focused on exchanging mutual counter-terror experiences in the field of mountain warfare, reconnaissance operations, fighting in built-up area, tactical preparation, hostage and rescue and air assault techniques. An analyst noted that these exercises have been valuable for Pakistan to learn to use Russian military hardware for its Counterinsurgency (COIN) and Counterterrorism (CT) operations, including combat aircraft and infantry weapons.[36]

Table 1: Pakistan-Russia Joint Military Exercises (2014-2020)

Type of Exercise	Code Name	Date	Location
Naval	Arabian Monsoon-I	Oct 17-20, 2014	North Arabian Sea
	Arabian Monsoon-II	Dec 4-9, 2015	
	Arabian Monsoon-III	Nov 30- Dec 1, 2018	

[33] Maksim Shepovalenko, "On the Nature and Focus of Joint Combat Training Events Between the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Armed Forces of India and Pakistan," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 32(3), (October 2, 2019): 303–323.

[34]Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, "Second Joint Russian-Pakistani Antidrug Exercises "Arabian Monsoon-2015"," (December 9, 2015).

[35] "Aman," https://aman.paknavy.gov.pk/Home.aspx (accessed August 12, 2019).

[36]Franz-Stefan Gady, "Russia and Pakistan to Hold First Ever Military Exercise," *The Diplomat*, September 14, 2016, https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/russia-and-pakistan-to-hold-first-ever-military-exercise/(accessed May 17, 2018).

Special Warfare Exercises	Druzhba-I (Friendship 2016)	Sep 24-Oct 10, 2016	Special Operations School, Cherat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan
	Druzhba-II (Friendship 2017)	Sep24- Oct 4, 2017	Minralney Vody in North Caucasus, Karachaevo Cherkess Republic, Russia
	Druzhba-III (Friendship 2018)	Oct 21 -Nov 4, 2018	Special Operations School, Cherat; National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Pabbi, Punjab Province; Pakistan
	Druzhba-IV (Friendship 2019)	Oct 2-11, 2019	Krasnodar, Russia
	Druzhba-V (Friendship 2020)	Nov 8-19, 2020	Special Service Headquarters in Tarbela**,** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province;andNCTC,Pabbi, Punjab Province
Naval (Multinational)	Aman-17	Feb10-14, 2017	Arabian Sea
	Aman-19	Feb 8-12, 2019	
Multinational under SCO	Peace Mission-2018	Aug22-29, 2018	Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia
	Tsentr-2019 (Center-2019)	Sep 16-21, 2019	Training Grounds of Central Military

			District, Russia
	Kavkaz-2020 (Caucasus-2020)	Sep 21-26, 2020	Training Grounds of Southern Military District, Russia
Source: Data compiled by Author through various sources including ISPR (www.ispr.gov.pk)			

Moreover, the value of Friendship Exercise is enormous in terms of COIN and CT experience gained during the exercises. Commenting on Friendship 2017 exercises, Andrew Korybko argued that Pakistan can share its extensive experience waging mountainous counterterrorism operations in tribal areas with Russian armed personnel, while Russia can share Pakistan Special Forces key anti-ISIS tactics. He noted that Russia-Pakistan exercises and military cooperation "can lead to the two countries becoming anti-terrorist superpowers and greatly enhancing Eurasian security."[37]Russia seeks Pakistan's cooperation to counter the threat of regional affiliate of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K)—the term 'Khorasan' refers to the region of Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asia. The fight against IS-K has led to an acceleration of counterterrorism coordination between Pakistan and Russia bilaterally as well as multilaterally through SCO framework.[38]
The exercises also foster understanding of Pakistan and its culture, promote confidence and a sense of common interest between Pakistan and Russian military. On the closing ceremony of Friendship 2018, General Bajwa stated that the Friendship Exercise is "a great forum to reinforce existing relationship between the two militaries."[39]

Furthermore, the political and strategic benefits of the exercises are immense. In particular, the exercises have consolidated Islamabad's defence diplomatic efforts to persuade Moscow to shift away from a lopsided Indian foreign policy in the region. This was evident from Russia's decision to continue with 2016 and 2017Friendship drills despite India's concerns.[40]This

[37]Polina Tikhonova, "*Pakistan-Russia drills: Anti-terrorist Superpower Alliance*," (Value Walk, September 25, 2017), accessed December 4, 2017, http://www.valuewalk.com/2017/09/russia-pakistan-drills-superpower-alliance/ .
[38]Samuel Ramani, "Russia and Pakistan: A durable anti-American alliance in South Asia," *The Diplomat*, (April 21, 2018), accessed May 8, 2018 https://thediplomat.com/2018/04/russia-and-pakistan-a-durable-anti-american-alliance-in-south-asia/.
[39]*Dawn*, (November 5, 2018).
[40]Imdad Hussain, "The Flaws in India's Plan to Diplomatically Isolate Pakistan," *The Express Tribune*, (March 28, 2017).

decision represented a major impact of Pakistan's defence diplomacy on Russia's policy in the region.

Since 2018, the militaries of both states also interacted and participated in three multinational exercises codenamed as 'Peace Mission 2018', 'Centre 2019' and 'Caucasus 2020' under the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of SCO. The exercises were hosted by Russia and focused on countering the threat of international terrorism. Taken together, these exercises further deepened Pakistan-Russia security cooperation and build the military capability of SCO member-states to tackle common security threats and promote regional stability.

2. Port Calls

The exchanges of port calls between Pakistan and Russia are an important defence diplomacy mechanism to build trust and maritime partnership. Ship visits are a way to support Pakistan's political, security and diplomatic goals as Pakistan's navy personnel ashore can be excellent ambassadors of its goodwill. The first visit by Pakistan's navy sailors to Russia took place in October 2013, when Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Aslat made a call to Black Seaport of Novorossiysk. Pakistan Fleet Commander Admiral Khan Hasharm Bin Saddique described the visit "a new stage in cooperation" between the two states. The ship visit provided opportunities for Pakistan navy personnel to conduct a range of activities—including meeting with Commander of the Novorossiysk naval base, meetings with Russian navy personnel, a visit to the city mayor and sightseeing tour of the city. Pakistan and Russian navy sailors also played a mini football match and a tug of war competition.[41] The visit served to promote friendly relations and build linkages between the two navies. In April 2014, Russian Federation Navy (RFN) made a first ever reciprocal visit to Karachi port indicating a growing relationship with Pakistan Navy. On conclusion of the visit, Russian navy ships participated in a joint anti-piracy exercise.[42] In October of the same year, Russian ships paid another goodwill visit to Pakistan, conducted training activities and held tabletop discussions on defence cooperation in Indian Ocean followed by a joint training with Pakistan Navy in Arabian Sea.[43] This visit demonstrated RFN keen interest in Pakistan Navy capabilities against security threats in the IOR. Subsequently, ship visits have become a key element of bilateral defence relationship [Table 2]. Exchanges of port calls may be particularly important to Pakistan as these facilitate substantive policy discussions and allow deeper engagement with

[41]*Tass*, (October 17, 2013), accessed October 5, 2019, https://tass.com/world/702371
[42]*Business Standard*, (April 20, 2014).
[43]*The News International*, (October 17, 2014).

RFN. In August 2018, PNS Aslat made a visit to Saint Petersburg to take part in Russia's Navy Day ceremonies. The significant of this visit is highlighted by the fact that the Commander-In-Chief of Russian armed forces, President Putin was the Chief Guest of the naval parade and Aslat was the only foreign ship attending this event. Pakistan Navy delegation was led by Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Kaleem Shaukat. During port call, interactions of Pakistan navy officials with RFN were conducted which helped in enhancing mutual understanding and confidence building. Aslat was also opened for Russian citizens with the aim to strengthen people to people contact and build trust among societies of the two states.[44]

Table 2: Port Calls Conducted by Pakistan and Russia 2014 – 2019

Date	**Details of Port Calls**
April 19-23, 2014	Russia's anti-submarine warship Marshal Shaposhnikov and service ship Alatau visited Karachi port.
May 2014	PNS Rahna ward visited Novorossiysk.
October 16–22, 2014	Russian naval frigate Yaroslav Mudry and tanker Kola visited Karachi port.
December 4-6, 2015	Russian navy vessel Vice-Admiral Kulakov visited Karachi port.
December 6-9, 2016	PNS Alamgir paid a visit to port of Novorossiysk.
February 10-14, 2017	Russian ship Severomorsk visited Karachi and took part in Aman 2017 Exercises.
July 28-31, 2018	PNS Aslat paid a first ever visit to Saint Petersburg, Russia.
November 26-30, 2018	Russian ship Severomorsk and Middle Sea Tanker Kama visited Karachi port. Russian sailors participated in international exhibition of weapons and military equipment 'IDEAS-2018.'
February 8-12, 2019	Russian Navy Ship participated in Aman 2019 Exercises.

[44]*The News International*, (August 2, 2018).

Source: Data compiled by Author through various sources including ISPR (www.ispr.gov.pk).

Most importantly, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on "Training of Naval Personnel and the Conduct of Joint Military Exercises" was signed during the meeting of Vice Admiral Shaukat and Russian Navy's Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Vladimir Ivanovich Korolev. The MOU would allow Pakistan Navy to substantially increase its operational synergy with RFN in maintaining the maritime security and freedom of navigation along Sea Lines of Communication across IOR.[45] From an Indian perspective, naval cooperation between Pakistan and Russia is a cause for concern as it would have long-term security implications for New Delhi in the IOR.[46]

Conclusion and Recommendations

A number of conclusions may be drawn from Pakistan's defence diplomacy towards Russia. One, defence diplomacy has significantly reduced Pakistan-Russia 'historic distrust' and created valuable military to military linkages which could in turn, be used to exercise influence at multiple levels to manage and prevent conflict or a potential crisis. Two, Pakistan's defence diplomatic efforts have brought a change in Russia's perceptions towards its role in the 'War on Terror.' Moscow is increasingly convinced to believe in Islamabad's capability to curb the threat of militant-terrorist organizations specifically IS-K and this has provided an impetus to accelerate counterterrorism cooperation between the two states. Three, Pakistan-Russia strategic engagement has been able to overcome political differences on Afghanistan. As the Taliban were gaining influence and control of Afghanistan, Russia and Pakistan agreed that a negotiated settlement was the only feasible solution for the future stability of Afghanistan and the region. Russia, in fact, hosted parallel peace initiative involving Afghan Taliban. Islamabad views that Moscow is back in the new great game. At the time of this writing, United States completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan on August 30, 2021—following successful peace agreement with Afghan Taliban in Doha, Qatar in February 2020—and Taliban took control of Kabul in August 2021.[47]Four, Russia increasingly considers Pakistan akey player in the regional security

[45]Maqbool Malik, "Pakistan, Russia sign MoU for naval cooperation," *The Nation*, (August 1, 2018).

[46] B. M. Jain, *South Asia Conundrum: The Great Power Gambit* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2019): 126.

[47]Khan, "Russia–Pakistan Strategic Relations."

architecture of South and Central Asia. Conversely, Moscow and New Delhi seem to continue to drift away on strategic issues including stabilizing Afghanistan, counterterrorism and regional security. Five, Moscow and Islamabad have been expanding cooperation in maritime realm too. Indeed, this convergence of interests was not possible without Pakistan's vigorous defence diplomacy. However, given Russia's longstanding strategic relations with India, it remains to be seen whether Pakistan can secure Moscow diplomatic and political support for reducing tensions with India and purchasing advanced weapons from Russia. Arguably, defence relations would further improve from a deepening cooperation in security as well as trade, energy and economy. In this connection, the policy recommendations are as follows:

1. To deal with the complex security challenges, Pakistan and Russia should deepen cooperation on cyber security, military education and training, drug trafficking and military-technological cooperation.
2. There is a role for Pakistan's security and defence think tanks and academic institutions to hold frequent discussions with Russian defence institutions to promote mutual understanding on a wide range of areas including energy and trade fields. The engagement would also enhance social and cultural linkages and people to people contact.
3. Pakistan's defence diplomatic efforts should seek Moscow's cooperation through SCO forum in stabilizing Afghanistan, reducing tensions with India and helping to diffuse a future Pakistan-India crisis
4. Both states can cooperate to broader security in the IOR including capacity building, reducing disaster risks and ensuring freedom of navigation.

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THE EVOLVING RUSSO-PAK ENTENTE-CORDIALE: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Toheeda Begum*

Abstract

Historically, the Russo-Pak relationship had a foreign policy context and a legacy that went through the historic eras of pre-partition Great Game between the British Indian and Czarist Empires, and the post-partition Cold War between the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA).Pakistan on its creation sided with the American led West through Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) or Baghdad Pact, plus, the partnerships against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and in the War on Terror. The US military and financial aid and the support by the International and Asian financial institutions for Pakistan is decades old—albeit now with a friction over Afghanistan, Russia and China. Still, the transactional-cooperation remains over Afghanistan through the air-corridor that is useful for Americans in many ways. American influence, assets and the air-corridor is a deadly mix in Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban know that the drones, jets and aircrafts using the corridor take-off from and land at Qatar without ever landing in Afghanistan. Moreover, intelligence sharing is part of Pak-US operational cooperation with a possibility of a military base too. The context of Pak-US cooperation is the centuries old British era Frontier Policy. It remained until the American strategic withdrawal from Afghanistan. The relationship since then has deteriorated and the perception of each other is not harmonious despite the tactical cooperation in Afghanistan. The reason is the strategic choices made by Pakistan and America lacking congruence over China, Russia, Afghanistan and India. The interactive-arm-twisting of Pakistan is an indicator. The rest is the detail of Pakistan's New Frontier Policy.

Keywords: Eurasia, New Great Game, New Cold War, New Frontier Policy, Energy Control.

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Introduction

A triangular relationship between Pakistan, China and Russia is growing in the midst of New Great Game, the New Cold War and the New Frontier Policy. Pakistan's New Frontier Policy encompasses both China and Russia. The triangular cooperation is strategic, especially with the Chinese and the evolving *entente-cordial* with Russia carries great potential. The nuclear triangle indicates a balance of power too, whereas, China and Russia have a 'no-limit partnership' as great power competition continues. The trust initiated by President Musharraf during a visit to Moscow in 2004 was meant to forge a partnership. That conviction since then is being nurtured. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the forging of a new relationship with Russia is Pakistan's New Frontier Policy. Back in 2018, a British security think tank Royal United Service Institute (RUSI) assessed that for the first time in 200 years, Pakistan Army has abandoned the British raj policy of confronting Russia for control over Central Asia—and Pakistan Army now sees the Russians as their strategic partners.[1] The reset is a historic paradigm-shift.

Pakistan's perception is that Russia is no more an ideological or a strategic threat. The incorporation of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is an indicator, though operational tasks remain. It is a recurring problem. The challenge is the diplomatic and operational management of diminishing and transactional British era Frontier Policy and the forging of a strategic partnership with Russia, besides, the expansion of Sino-Pak relationship with Cyberspace and Artificial Intelligence (AI) too. Chinese are challenging Americans in AI, Cyberspace and high-end technologies, whereas, Russians are global in hardware, AI, Cyberspace and increasingly in the world of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI).The technological competition is meaningful for Pakistan's national-security. Pakistan's foreign policy interests decisively converge with China and by extension with Russia, as opposed to continuously expanding decades old *Indo-US Entente* that now includes Space and Cyberspace cooperation. Also, rising as a global power, China has regarded the existing world order unreasonable enough to meet the interests of China and emerging powers.[2] The budding powers are Asian powers like Pakistan, besides, Russia as a revanchist Eurasian power—despite the economic and strategic problems of the two.

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[1]Murtaza Ali Shah, "Pakistan Army has reversed Great Game: report", *The News*, (8 September 2018), accessed on 12 April 2022, https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/365389-pak-army-has-reversed-great-game-report?fbclid=IwAR3LH_YYa9F3rjWiAZcfzC7M564wmldsNlINdFKUqzmFsmE5p_nEk_OueJ44

[2]Suisheng Zhao, *China's New Global Strategy: The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Volume 1* (New York: Routledge, 2020): 1.

The Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) is exporting finance and infrastructure to operationalize a supply-chain with China at the qualitative high-end. The same is true for Russian perception on exporting its capital. The mix of revisionist Russia and an ascending China is now a global challenge in the realms of finance, technology, trade, energy and strategy. Moreover, the CPEC and the new relationship with Russia is the New Frontier Policy. Pakistan's New Frontier Policy is State-Policy and state-policies do not change with a change in government.[3]However, Pakistan's diplomacy is challenged by a strategic-friction between the old and new frontier-policies. The challenge is complex. For an order is being replaced by another. It is strategically meaningful and competitive. The transition is destabilizing. In the context, the two challenges of Balochistan and the erstwhile FATA across the Indus have domestic and foreign policy dimensions in the context of Pakistan's New Frontier Policy.[4] Likewise, the fact that China and India are growing strong simultaneously is an entirely new fact, one carrying significant risks.[5] The Sino-Indian Himalayan tensions are an indicator of this simultaneous rise of the two great powers.

Russia too is not of the 1990s. It is a resurgent Eurasian power in a conflict with the American led Nato in Ukraine. Russians have good relations with the Chinese and Indians and are forging an equation with Pakistan. Russians can have a calming effect on the region and beyond, notwithstanding the war in Ukraine. Though, it's no longer debatable that the USA and China are entering their own New Cold War and that President Xi has declared it, whereas, a rare bipartisan consensus in the USA has accepted the challenge.[6] America has an operational financial-law fare against Russia, whereas, its Indo-Pacific pivot along with Japan, Australia and India is aimed at containing China. The Chinese are responding to the pivot in East Asia, South China Sea, South and Central Asia, plus Indian Ocean, as are Russians in Ukraine, Eastern Mediterranean, and South and Central Asia. The chessboard is murky. The clash of interests is regional and global. And India has clashed with Pakistan and China over Kashmir.[7]

Pakistan's foreign policy challenge is to correctly contextualize all the great and regional powers within the Eurasia strategic environment. This

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[3]Saeeda *et al.*, "The Frontier Policy", *The Dialogue*, 16 (1), (*January-March 2021*). accessed on 12 April 2022, https://www.academia.edu/45611762/The_Frontier_Policy (accessed on 12 April 2022).

[4]Khalil Ur Rehman, "Balochistan: The Strategic Pearl", *The Dialogue*, VI (1), (2010), accessed on 12 April 2022, https://www.academia.edu/10389410/Balochistan_The_Strategic_Pearl .

[5]Bruno Macaes, *Belt and Road: A Chinese World Order* (London: Hurst & Company, 2018): 110-111.

[6]Hal Brands & John Lewis Gaddis, "The New Cold War", *Foreign Affairs*, 100 (6), (2021):10-21.

[7]Jonathan Holslag, *World Politics since 1989* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021), 3.

is vital for strategic and foreign policy decision making. And as the play thickens on the Eurasian chessboard, red-lines and thresholds are being drawn gradually. The strategic-intentions and foreign policy objectives are backed by an AI-driven Cyberspace and strategic infrastructure to add operational-authenticity to the declaratory aspects of foreign policy. Take for example China which intends its forces to deter any thought of an attack or infringement on Chinese territory, or on anything it defines as a significant interest, such as its global shipping and sources of food, oil, and other essential materials.[8] And Russia is more than willing to defend its interests in Europe, Mediterranean Sea, Greater Middle East and Central Asia, especially in Afghanistan. Pakistan's interests are converging with Chinese, Russians and Central Asians in Afghanistan and Central Asia, let alone Pakistan's energy and wheat needs that Russia is willing to take care-off. Pakistan's diplomatic, strategic and intelligence cooperation with Russians and Central Asians is now almost two decades old and is significant in time and space dimensions. The Central Asian perception is that Pakistan is central to Afghanistan, so is Russian.

America is buttressing a militarized Germany against Russia and a globalized India against China as its bulwarks. Americans have raised the bars in Eurasia. However, Russia and China are countering American moves diplomatically and strategically with an impact. There are indeed economic and geopolitical giants that continue to have sway in global affairs.[9] Strategically, what was an implicit affair is now an explicit strategic and technological competition. It is an escalating Eurasian strategic environment. Ukraine is an additional theatre to the ongoing two-decade old struggle for the Eurasian domination. It is impacting Pakistan in many ways. Ukraine enjoys good relations with Pakistan and supplied T-80 tanks and other hardware to Pakistan in the post-USSR context. However, the *entente-cordiale* with Russia and by extension with Central Asia has to be preserved and nurtured. Russia is far more important for Pakistan in the world of *Real politik*, as opposed to Ukraine. The calculations of power dictate as such. The diplomatic challenge involves a rigorous balancing act by Pakistan. More importantly, US foreign policy confirmed the image of the United States as an adversary and convinced North Korea, Iran and Pakistan that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were needed to stop it.[10] The three are not much off the mark.

Ukraine has shifted the strategic centre of gravity from the Indo-Pacific to Europe for great powers, not that South China Sea is dormant. The

[8]Clyde Prestowitz, *The World Turned Upside Down* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 98.
[9]Tim Marshall, *The Power of Geography: The Maps that Reveal the Future of our World* (London: Elliot and Thompson Ltd, 2021), xii.
[10]Jonathan Holslag, *World Politics since 1989* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021): 112-113.

Ukrainian conflict has a trans-Eurasian geo-political impact on regional powers, let alone the effect on food supply-chain. Pakistan in the context is not an exception. Also, both Presidents Biden and Xi in their long-distance virtual meetings failed to evolve a consensus over the conflict in Ukraine. President Xi declined to hold President Putin responsible for Ukraine and asked the US president to hold dialogue with Russia to resolve the various aspects of the conflict. Xi also asked Biden to address the valid security concerns of Russia. The Sino-American animosity is on the rise and it is not in China's interest to turn its back on Russia. Plus, aiming China with Russia like sanctions will have implications for global financial system. The Chinese have rejected the US Cold War mentality. And whereas Americans are cautious towards Pakistan, the embracing of India is that of a lover. Still, South Asia in American perception is an economic backwater that would soon impose itself as a major source of global insecurity.[11] And Afghanistan is a transactional-game between Pakistan and America in South Asia.

Great-Power Competition and Eurasia

By 2020 China had already disbursed US$38 billion of loans to South Asia, and in Pakistan, it has completed Gwadar Port and energy projects, and is upgrading roads through the Karakoram Pass. Besides, China is central to the international system as world's largest trading power and greatest source of global lending while boasting the world's largest population and military, and has become a global centre of innovation.[12] Plus, the Sino-Russian energy cooperation is mammoth. And critical is the connection between energy-security and state-security. Though, the less said about the deals with the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) in Pakistan, the better it is. Since energy-security is now national-security, South Asia contributes towards its insecurities by its energy-deficiencies. Russia can be a net energy-contributor to tackle these insecurities. Russia and Pakistan have a $2 billion energy pipeline agreement which according to the plan has to be operationalized in 2023,[13] however the completion seems difficult by the deadline. For timeworn geo-political frontiers are back. Europe is dependent on Russian gas despite the decision to stop gas imports from Russia. However, Hungary does not agree and an alternative will take time. Russia has reduced its own dependence involving energy and financial domains e.g., it developed a substitute for the clearing-mechanism Swift and

[11] Ibid., 124.

[12] Elizabeth Economy, "Xi Jinping's New World Order: Can China Remake the International System", *Foreign Affairs*, 101 (1), (2022): 52-61.

[13] Ministry of foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, accessed on 27/06/2022 https://mofa.gov.pk/notice-pakistan-north-south-gas-pipeline-to-open-new-market-for-russia/,

Visa credit cards, and in information technology it has an internet that can be disconnected, if required, from the global internet.[14]

The strategic dimension of the competition is in the forefront of a rivalry over geo-economic, geo-energy and geo-technological domination of Eurasia. The competition is metamorphosing into a New Cold War between great powers with technological innovation at the heart of it. Russia already produces advanced hardware of all types and the Chinese investment in Research and Development (R&D) matches that of the USA. The Sino-Russian security collaboration is already meaningful plus. And if the Sino-Russian cooperation broadens into a military alliance, it would enhance the substantial threat China already poses to the American led west, and Pakistan is tightly tied to China, as Saudi Arabia is becoming more so.[15]The Chinese power of adaptability is enormous. Russia is on board with China to integrate Eurasia to create a New World Order (NOW). The war in Ukraine is a spanner in the wheel, but part of it. Pakistan has to anchor itself in the Eurasian security context to reap evolving dividends as BRI and CPEC continue unfolding. Russians in 2015 agreed to merge Russia led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) into BRI. The Russian endorsement of China threw open Central Asia for Chinese investments.

While the idea of integration is European, yet China and Russia are integrating Eurasia. Nevertheless, India is explicitly against the BRI and CPEC and is a strategic partner in the framework of Indo-Pacific strategy against China. Eurasia is becoming smaller, more integrated, the stage for intense rivalry and competition between different poles, each of them projecting influence outwards and creating new connections.[16] Pakistan's bilateralism with China and Russia should be able to withstand the American financial arm-twisting and the US influence in Eurasia. Pakistan is an important strategic player in a sensitive region at the heart of Eurasia. Pakistan controls southern route to the *Heartland.* Convergence of interests is a powerful idea between Nation-States and Pakistan's economic, technological and hardware interests are converging with China and Russia. American led west is not willing to share technology and hardware with Pakistan. The tying-up of Pakistan with America and Europe through a limited trade is Western strategy. Pakistan has to move beyond being the sweat-shop of America and Europe.

Certain regions of the Eurasian supercontinent are dense areas of technological innovation e.g., Europe and East Asia, others are enormously rich in natural resources e.g., Russia, it is here that the United States finds

[14]Jonathan Holslag, *World Politics since 1989* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021): 306.
[15]Clyde Prestowitz, *The World Turned Upside Down* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 230.
[16]Bruno Macaes, *Belt and Road: A Chinese World Order* (London: Hurst & Company, 2018): 4.

the only state actors rivaling it in power and wealth: China, Russia, the European Union, perhaps India in the future, as well as smaller states it nonetheless regards as security threats.[17] Is Pakistan one of those smaller states as a threat in American perception? Besides, the war in Ukraine has created a new context in which Europe is forced to square-off against Russia, not to mention EU-China tensions over Russia. An indicator of things to come is the $112 billion jump in German defense budget. The militarization of Germany against Russia is back and Americans yet again successfully disallowed a *German-Russo Entente* that could have challenged American dominance in the long run. Even British Brexit is aimed at blocking full spectrum German rise. Americans fought two World Wars to disallow this to happen in Europe. In the post-USSR context, American aim is not to allow Germans and Russians come together. The methodology involved is continuing eastward expansion of NATO since the end of Cold War while also influencing European decision making. The Eurasian strategic environment definitely impacts Pakistan.

Both China and Russia are working towards a multipolar world, as opposed to diminishing American unipolarity. Pakistanis looking forward to a multipolar world, both at declaratory and operational levels of foreign policy. The struggle is for preserving and expanding spheres of influence. The context for China is no more domestic or regional; it is global, whereas, Russian framework is Eurasian. And Pakistan's economy of national security makes it an Asian power. The truth is that the economic capacity of a nation plays a far less important role in determining the course of the power struggle than is generally supposed.[18] The same is true for Pakistan's economy. Pakistan is central to the power struggle in Eurasia. It understands that. It should play restraint, but a bold one. Pakistan's suicidal instinct and its nuclear deterrence throw any conventional invasion of Pakistan out of the window. However, domestic context makes it vulnerable. All consecutive governments in Pakistan have been shoddier than the earlier one. A destabilized Pakistan suits Americans, as opposed to a stable one desired by Russians and Chinese. The BRI is already having a significant impact and central to its success is Pakistan which is rich in natural resources and with a vast internal market of over 200 million people, it is an asset for BRI.[19]

The BRI and CPEC support is across the board in Pakistan. It is an integral part of Pakistan's political and strategic structure. Besides, Russians too like Chinese have opened their universities involving disciplines that Americans and Europeans have banned for Pakistanis since long, especially

[17] Ibid., 5.
[18] James Schlesinger, *The Political Economy of National Security: A Study of the Economic Aspects of the Contemporary Power Struggle* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger Publishers, 1982): i.
[19] Bruno Macaes, loc. cit., 59-60.

metallurgy. Russian investments in Pakistan's natural resources and its market need to be encouraged. Pakistan's security cooperation with Russia too is of an immense importance keeping in view the hybrid-warfare challenges and the continuing insurgencies in Balochistan and Pakistan's erstwhile FATA. The annual military exercises between the two countries are continuing in addition to training opportunities at the Russian's military institutions. The procurement of hardware from Russia, particularly the jet-engines, MI35 helicopters and long-range air-defense systems, is an attractive option along with China in the absence of American and European choices. With the strategic environment what it is, Russia cements the Sino-Pak strategic equation. Pakistan's choices are obvious in the midst of major realignments taking place in the region and beyond. The growing *Indo-US Entente* makes Sino-Pak-Russo equation a choice, as also a necessity in Eurasia.

Convergence of Interests and Civilizations

Convergence of interests is meaningful in statecraft. Pakistan's strategic, economic, trade and investment interests are clearly converging with China and Russia. Russians now have an access to Gwadar Port too and the Sino-Russian equation is to Pakistan's foreign policy advantage. However, Pakistan's exports to Russia were a meagre $175.2 million in 2021. This needs to improve in a big way to counter European and American arm-twisting. Pakistan's economy of national security is bit more than a sweatshop of Americans and Europeans. Russians on their part are contemplating long term investments in Pakistan e.g., a group of companies led by Russian Gazprom is seeking to invest $14 billion in the energy infrastructure that includes two gas pipelines, plus underground storage facilities and gas from Russian owned deposits in Iran. The Russo-Pak energy interaction is a positive indicator of an improving strategic partnership. Pakistan's domestic gas shortages and demands are rising and it is an occasion to act in Pakistan's interest. It is time for Pakistan to truly define its trade, commercial, energy and strategic interests to reach-out to a multilateral world that both China and Russia are in the process of creating.

Besides, decisions have been made by the Kremlin and public opinion that Russia does not belong to the Western world and will no longer try to become one of its poles.[20] It is a coincidence of history that the Russian decision coincided with the decline in the American power, as Russia continues embracing Asia. The question of Ukraine was one of the undecided questions of international politics and so are terrorism and energy control. Russia's Special-Operations in Ukraine are an effort to settle the unsettled Ukrainian question to its advantage. Russian perception is that

[20]Bruno Macaes, The Dawn of Eurasia (London: Penguin Books, 2019): 8.

Russia knows how international politics work. The Russian claim rests on knowing the *Real World* and not an imaginary world pursued by Americans and Europeans. Russians play by the rules of *Realpolitik* rooted in power and power politics. And as opposed to the single Western model to be imposed on the entire world, Russian belief is that the change and the pace of change have to be in harmony with the cultural norms of a given society. Russians seek a new international order that is less parochial and more inclusive. The eastward expansion of NATO to Russians is a strategic error in the sense of losing an opportunity to create an inclusive World Order. Time in Russian perception is not on the side of fading American order. Time could be on Russia's side.[21]

Eurasianism is back in Russia. The Eurasianist perception is that the Western cultural hegemony needs to end. The Eurasian legacy is explained in an original academic work titled *The Legacy of Genghis Khan* by Prince Nikolai Sergeyevich Trubetzkoy. To Eurasianists, the landlocked geographic space between Western and Central Europe at one end and East and South Asia at the other end is Eurasia. This landlocked Eurasia, Eurasianists believe, needs to be unified. Genghis Khan was the first to accomplish this unification and therefore the Russian state, which has striven and continues to strive to recreate the broken unity, 'is the descendent of Genghis Khan, the heir and successor of his historical endeavors[22]The 15th century birth of a state in Moscow expanded just like the Mongol Empire, despite the Mongol yoke for five hundred years. The Tatars were replaced by Czars and Czarinas. They demanded the unification of Russia and the Horde under the power of Moscow.[23] The struggle is civilizational.

There had always been unease between the West European and Russian civilizations. The same remains true today. The perception is that the Eurasian idea is an adversarial idea for the West European civilization, as opposed to Russia led Slavic civilization. The Russian idea now is to throw away the yoke of Western civilization,[24] as was done in case of Mongols after 500 years of subjugation. The fascinating thing about the Eurasianism is that, on the one hand, it refers to a third continent carved out of the landmass between Europe and Asia, and on the other, it means the

[21]Liana Fix & Michael Kimmage, "What if the War in Ukraine Doesn't End?", *Foreign Affairs* (20 April 2022), accessed on 20 April 2022. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-04-20/what-if-war-ukraine-doesnt-end?utm_medium=newsletters&utm_source=fatoday&utm_campaign=What%20If%20the%20War%20in%20Ukraine%20Doesn%E2%80%99t%20End?&utm_content=20220420&utm_term=FA%20Today%20-%20112017

[22]Nikolai Sergeyevich Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia's identity.* ed. Anatoly Liberman (Michigan: Slavic Publications, 1991[1925]): 167.

[23]Ibid., 183-184

[24]Ibid., 220.

supercontinent encompassing Europe, Asia and everything in between.[25] The Russian perception revolves around reorganizing and reordering the Greater Eurasia in harmony with China and others. It is an evolving phenomenon and the Now Moment in foreign policy is critical in the meaning of things unfolding. The emerging *entente-cordiale* between Pakistan and Russia is civilizational. Otherwise too, Pakistan is either way located on the geographical-frontiers of this historic Eurasian idea at the heart of Russian state and its history. Pakistan needs an intellectual and academic capital to forge a relationship with Russia in the greater context of its relationship with China, a relationship which should be to its advantage. It is a civilizational coming together.

Moreover, the CPEC within the BRI is an ambitious undertaking involving all sectors of Pakistan's economy. Chinese companies are getting integrated into Pakistan's economic structures. India is concerned over the range and aspiration of CPEC and beyond. The Indian perception is that CPEC has geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economics ambitions. For a Chinese-Pakistani alliance taking shape, most notably in Gwadar Port, near the Strait of Hormuz, and an Indian naval buildup on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, near the Strait of Malacca, the Indian-Chinese rivalry is taking on the dimensions of a maritime Great Game.[26] The Sino-Indian clashes in the Himalayas are an indicator of China expecting India to recognize Chinese power in Asia. There are many more indicators too e.g., India joining Quad and continuing to expand its *entente* with the USA. The greater context is the Sino-Indian geo-political competition encompassing an arc from the Strait of Hormuz to the Strait of Malacca. Meaningfully, Russia never denounced China over the Sino-Indian clashes in the Himalayas and now China's access to Gwadar Port too. The Chinese returned the favor by not denouncing Russia over the war in Ukraine.

What Pakistan needs to understand is that, 'if a country's goal is economic growth above all other considerations, the truly winning combination appear to be neither liberal democracy nor socialism of either a Leninist or democratic variety, but the combination of liberal economics and authoritarian politics that some observers have labeled the bureaucratic authoritarian state, or what we might term a market-oriented authoritarianism'.[27] Pakistan's foreign policy has to correctly contextualize the regional and global strategic environments, especially the altered strategic environment in the Himalayas. The British legacy in South Asia pursued by Americans since 1947 is a destabilizing one. It is a source of

[25]Bruno Macaes, loc. cit., 185.
[26]Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire.* Trans from French by Mischa Gabowitch (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 2008), 129.
[27]Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 2020[1992]): 123.

friction. Besides, Russia's pivot to the East is being absorbed by the countries economically and strategically. The United States may be rich now, but developing countries, where Russia is much more popular, have brighter prospects.[28]Not to mention the fact that the overtly pro-Western camp in Russia has shriveled to insignificance.[29] The faction has literally withered away.

The Nuclear Triangle

Russia has adopted the route of independent foreign policy in partnership with China and the Muslim world.[30]The realignments taking place as a result of Russian pivot are significant and meaningful. And based on similarities in worldview, it is possible to see Russia and China as two pillars of what some have called the "World without the West, or the WWW".[31]Plus, the Russian threat for Pakistan is no more and the two sides are forging an increasingly meaningful strategic partnership that will impact the region and beyond in the years ahead. Pakistan's strategic perception now views Russia as a partner. Russians are on the side of Pakistan in Afghanistan in the midst of US financial, technological and intelligence interference in Afghanistan. There are also hardware agreements, intelligence cooperation[32] and annual *Druzhba* exercises between Russia and Pakistan, as opposed to an aggressive American arm-twisting of Pakistan. The popular reaction in Pakistan speaks for itself. The push and pull experienced by Pakistan is a question of operational and strategic management. Pakistan cannot allow to go things unnoticed beyond a certain point in the context of its relationship with China, as also increasingly in case of Russia for a variety of strategic and economic reasons. American involvement in Afghanistan is now a threat to the region, especially Pakistan. The TTP attacks in Waziristan are a backlash against the American interference in Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan continues in another form. Pakistan's air-strikes in Khost and Kunar indicated.

Russia is being integrated in CPEC and Moscow agreeing to participate in the construction and expansion of Gwadar Port is perceived as a game-changer in Pakistan. Equally, Chinese have welcomed it in the sense that it will allay Indian fears with regard to the CPEC. Russia has the

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[28]Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War; Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 201.
[29]Ibid., 117.
[30]Ibid., 202.
[31]Naazneen Barma *et al*., "Welcome to the World without the West", *The National Interest*, (12 November, 2014), accessed on 11 May 2022. https://nationalinterest.org/feature/welcome-the-world-without-the-west-11651.
[32]Saeeda; Waqas, Muhammad; Rehman, Khalil ur. Dialogue (Pakistan) . 3/31/2021, Vol. 16 Issue 1, p134-134.

potential to act as a glue in the South and Central Asian regions, as opposed to American overt and covert interference regionally and beyond. And as the American led West rushes hardware to Ukraine to escalate and prolong the war, what haunts NATO is a formal military alliance between China and Russia. The chances of the use of WMD in Ukraine are real. The new reality is that of a world of WMD and AI-weapons. The world is heading in the direction of human conducted AI-warfare in any case, if not, an autonomous AI-machine conducting AI-warfare with all types of AI-weapons. And since there are no agreements involving AI, restraint is the missing-link. The three unresolved problems of international politics i.e., energy security, terrorism and Ukraine will remain part of strategic environment for years to come. Pakistan is not only faced with these problems, but is confronted by players confronting these problems.

The deteriorating Pak-Afghan relations are not a good omen. Afghanistan and Ukraine are strategic-turfs. The two theaters have an escalating destabilizing impact across the length and breadth of Eurasia. And China's neutrality in the Ukrainian war is a dilemma for the American led West, not to mention the neutrality of number of other countries including Pakistan. Both Russia and Ukraine are China's friends and the Sino-Ukrainian trade in 2021 was $19.3 billion, as opposed to Sino-Russian trade worth $147 billion in the same year. Besides, President Xi in his virtual meeting with the EU leaders on 1st April 2022 urged all sides to show restraint and work towards a negotiated settlement. The Chinese leader urged American, European and Russian leaders to negotiate a new European security-framework. The escalating rhetoric is worrying for the Chinese. China's ascendance on the world stage is accompanied with its age-old Confucius wisdom asking for a middle-course restraint.

China's independent foreign policy neutrality is its impartiality and pragmatism. The same should be true for Pakistan as China's strategic partner, as opposed to transactional relationship with the USA. The meaningful truth is that both China and Russia are neutral in the conflicts be they Crimea, Taiwan, South China Sea and the Sino-Indian border dispute. The Sino-Russian relationship is a mature relationship and not a politicized one. Confucius is back in China, whereas, Orthodox Church is in the vanguard of Russian worldview. The Sino-Russian *entente-cordiale* is an association of civilizations. Both have a material and ideological capacity to pursue independent geo-political and geo-strategic objectives, irrespective of their economic standings. On the other hand, the pursuit of absolute security by the American led West is a problem for the world, let alone the great powers like China and Russia. The American led West may have discarded the Westphalian idea of sovereign nation-states as a foundational principle of World-Order, but China and Russia are civilizations. The war in Ukraine

is a conflict between Western and Russian civilizations impacting Chinese civilization too, let alone the Islamic civilization.

Alongside, the eastward expansion of Nato has unleashed a New Cold War with no treaties, rules and mechanisms overseeing the arms-race, especially in the realms of AI and Cyberspace. The Cold War era balance of power politics have not been replaced by a new equilibrium between great powers. This is problematic. The world is on a slippery slope. For the conflict now is nothing short of Clash of Civilizations.[33] Pakistan's pan-Islamic identity and worldview is pulled in all directions by civilizational dynamics. The safest route is pursuit of national interest. Geographic limits of any world order depend not on the reach of mind, but on the objective grasp controlling a regional or global geographic space. Technology played and plays an important role in the hegemonic control and operations of a geographic space. Historically, the formal framework for a function of hegemony was at the most regional, until technology in the last decade of 20th century gave birth to a globalized World Order. The post-Cold War World Order emerged after the Soviet disintegration. The United States ensures the hegemonic functioning of this global financial, trade and security architecture. However, challenges have emerged across Eurasia.

The contemporary, now global Westphalian system—what colloquially is called world community—has striven to curtail the anarchical nature of the world within an extensive network of international legal and organizational structures designed to foster open trade and a stable international financial system, establish accepted principles of resolving international disputes, and set limits on the conduct of wars when they do occur.[34]Yet, the USA and its allies have been at wars one after another since the end of the Cold War, and the conflict in Ukraine is an example of forcing Russia into a war. The insurgencies and counter insurgencies around the world too are a challenge to the World Order. Besides, the violation of the Westphalian principle of sovereignty by the USA and its vassal states in Europe is the new norm to reset the global financial balance. American strategic withdrawal from the Greater Middle East and its pivot to the Indo-Pacific and the shift of focus to Ukraine has forced realignments in Eurasia. Saudi Arabia and others are seeking a regional order involving another outside power, perhaps China, India or even Russia.[35]The reality of oil trade in Rubles and Yuan has also emerged. Moreover, the Asian balance in the absence of a hegemon is not a congruent one. America is not an Asian

[33]Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).
[34]Henry Kissinger, H. (2014). *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History.* (London: Penguin Books, 2014): 7.
[35]Ibid., 141.

hegemon. While India appears mostly concerned with China as a peer competitor, China sees its peer competitors in Japan and the United States.[36]

Conclusion

The coming together of Pakistan and Russia is strategic in nature and China is a force-multiplier of the trilateral-equation. Pakistan and Russia have strategic problems next door i.e., Afghanistan and Ukraine. Equally, American involvement in both the theaters is decades old. The coming decade is not an exception in the context of American involvement in Afghanistan and Ukraine. America is at war with Russia and with Pakistan it has number of problems, not to mention the Indo-US partnership adversarial to Pakistan and China. The Himalayan theatre on the LAC between China and India is an example of technology cutting across geography. The great geographic barriers between China and India are no more insurmountable and, therefore, expand the great power competition to yet another theater in the Himalayas. Pakistan is now the strategic extension of this new Sino-Indian theater with America in the background. Pakistan continues to be the strategic worry of India. The historic legacies of various Asian Empires that include Chinese, Russian, Indian and Islamic are interacting in a new Eurasian strategic environment with Americans as outsiders. American strategic withdrawal from Afghanistan has created a security vacuum that is increasingly sucking-in China and Russia. The reliance just on diplomacy is not sufficient.

In the context above, an immediate problem for the region and regional powers is the final outcome and an inclusive settlement in Afghanistan. However, the conflict in Afghanistan continues. The involvement of US, Pakistan and others is an operational fact. The implications for Pakistan are much more than any other regional or extra-regional power. Pakistan above all in its domestic structure, Russia partly in its south and west, China with its significantly Muslim Xinjiang and Iran too are influenced strategically by the developments in Afghanistan. [37] Afghanistan is a challenge for an Asian balance to emerge, so is Ukraine for a new European balance. Eurasia now has two theaters of active conflict with a serious potential of escalation, both at conventional and sub-conventional levels. The potential use of tactical nuclear weapons in the Ukrainian theater is backed by declaratory statements and rhetoric. The already deployed nuclear forces of Russia and NATO in the European theater add substance to the possibility. Meanwhile, the *Indo-US Entente* continues to expand in the midst of India exploiting the global and regional

[36]Ibid., 210.
[37]Ibid., 321.

strategic environments to its diplomatic and strategic advantages. India wants to have best of all the worlds.

The virtual summit between President Biden and Prime Minister Modi preceding US-India 2+2 Ministerial meeting in the second week of April 2022 was termed "constructive direct conversation" between the two leaders by the White House, as the United States sought more help from India to exert pressure on Russia. American president emphasized Indo-US defense partnership and offered to diversify India's energy needs while pointing out that it was not in India's interest to expand its energy imports from Russia. India by the time of this writing had already imported around 15 million barrels of discounted Russian crude oil since the start of the Ukrainian war. However, Indian perception is that what India purchases from Russia in a month are purchased by Europe in an afternoon. And notwithstanding Prime Minister Modi's urgings to Presidents Putin and Zelenskyy for holding direct negotiations, India is executing the strategic management of a balancing act between the USA and Russian Federation over the war in Ukraine. The conflict in Ukraine and the strategic environment it has created is worrying for the Indians. It is fast approaching a stage where sides will have to be taken in the Real World of War and Peace. The Special-Operations intensified as Russia in its Donbas offensive engaged 1200 Ukrainian military targets on the first day of escalation with US-India 2+2 ministerial dialogue in the backdrop. The strategic environment is escalating.

The decades old Indo-US diplomacy is of a love-hate relationship, however, the two estranged-lovers have finally met and found each other. The April 2022 US-India 2+2 Ministerial meeting was a good-date and the two sides came out satiated in the strategic sense of the things e.g., the scientific cooperation to produce vaccines at the biological facilities in India, not to mention the security cooperation between the two in the Indo-Pacific in the defense of rule based order. The two sides also pledged an inclusive economic growth and people to people ties, especially in education and skill development. Moreover, the two decades old defense cooperation framework is expanding as a consequential partnership. It was agreed to expand the strategic cooperation to include technological innovation, Space and Cyberspace collaboration. The bilateral Space situational awareness arrangement, Cyberspace training exercises, expanding information-sharing within all war fighting spheres, trade in defense technology including air-launched unmanned aerial-vehicles and the new supply chain cooperative measures to fast support each other militarily whenever need arises. India is acquiring key US defense platforms that are forging greater ties between the two militaries. America recognizes India as a defense industry leader and a provider of net security in the Indo-Pacific region. The US-India 2+2 Ministerial dialogue is climbing of the next strategic-ladder.

In the context above, China, Russia and Pakistan need to strengthen their equation to balance the *Indo-US Entente* which is global in scope. The *Indo-US Entente* is a threat to China, Russia and Pakistan. American interests are clashing with Chinese, Russian and Pakistani security interests in Afghanistan, Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific. For example, America in case of Kashmir dispute is following Nehruan line to turn the Line of Control (LoC) into an international border, whereas over the Line of Actual Control (LAC) it is siding with India and, again in the Nehruan spirit, expecting China to cede territory to India. So much for Pakistan and China's national interests, not to mention Russian interests in Eastern Europe and Pakistan. Similarly, the May 2022 visit to Washington by Pakistan's DG (ISI) was limited to counter-terror cooperation in Afghanistan. The operational line taken in Afghanistan is not in the interest of Pakistan, Russia, China and Central Asian Republics (CARs). And Islamic State continues to be an interesting variable and is emerging as a threat in Afghanistan. One does not have to be a genius to figure out as to what Pakistan is expected to do in the perception of American establishment. American dissonant expectations from Pakistan revolve around Afghanistan, Russia and China. Americans buy their way out at individual and national levels. It is part of American created World Order. It is an element of statecraft since time immemorial.

Someone has said that lest is best. An imaginative lest for Pakistan, in the sense, is clinging to national interest like grim death. The ideas of nation-state and national-interest are synonymous, especially for a country like Pakistan. There is no other safe way out for a country surrounded by all the great powers. Pakistan is located at the crossroads of great power competition. Had it not been for Pakistan's nuclear weapon capability, the world would have forgotten Iraq and Syria. Pakistan needs to summon all its faculties, intellect and its ancient wisdom and imagination to chart a course in the midst of obvious strategic realities and the threats that emanate from these realities. The Now Moment is critical in decision making which sequentially comprises of facts, analysis, probabilities, possibilities and options. The choosing of an option in the decision making is tricky, because, half of it is science and the rest is art. For a decision maker is both an artist and a strategist. The whole thing involves an orienting generalization that gives decision maker an orientation to make decisions. And the first piece of orientation is to establish where one is, before tackling the bigger questions like where one wants to go and how to proceed. It not only involves induction and an inductive mind, but also wisdom and imagination. The problem of statecraft, especially in Pakistan, is that wisdom and imagination cannot be prescribed. It is a Divine gift.

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GLOBAL HEALTH DIPLOMACY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHINA'S AND THE U.S.'S SOFT POWER DURING COVID-19 AND THE MYTH OF THUCYDIDES TRAP

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Abstract

The emergence of COVID-19 has provided a new vigor to addressed global health issues. In this regard, global health diplomacy initiatives have seen a considerable surge. Countries around the world are using the opportunity to harness the potential of global health diplomacy in cultivating relations with several countries and also building a soft power projection. A case in point is how China has been spearheading global health efforts to improve relations while projecting a soft power about how China aims to act as global savior. Chinese efforts were able to gain significant traction owing to the fact that the United States under the administration of President Trump suspended its global leadership role, the first such instance in the post-World War-II era. This paper explains the concept of global health diplomacy by conducting a comparative analysis of the global health efforts and policies undertaken by both the United States and China by following qualitative research technique and secondary sources to explain the phenomenon. The study found that China led the response to COVID-19 not only domestically but globally as well. The U.S. lagged but gradually started to compete China in health diplomacy. There is an evident struggle for dominance in health sector between China and the U.S., however, it is not expected to lead into hard power struggle. The paper

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has concluded that it is important for both countries to work together in future in case of pandemic to spearhead an international effort against such crises. Moreover, it recommends Chinese authorities to include health corridor as a component with Belt and Road Initiative. On the other hand, the United States under the administration of President Joe Biden should invest in multilateral efforts so to empower global health institutions to better prepare for future health crises.

Keywords: Global Health Diplomacy, Soft Power, China, United States, COVID-19, WHO

Introduction

After the emergence of SARS-COVID-19 in December 2019 in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei province, China has continuously remained in the news with taking the blame from the Western states for not informing the world in time about the dangers posed by the new variant of SARS. The epidemic that was called in China soon evolved into a pandemic in March 2020 when the World Health Organization (WHO) warned all states to prepare an effective response to the pandemic. The confusion and blame game at the policy front by all major international players triggered confusion, disruption and required locking down markets and commercial activities. Which resulted in economic recession around the globe, thus resulting in inflation and job losses? The global south was impacted the most when it comes to economic meltdown. It is significant to note that in such a crisis of health security, the global health diplomacy (GHD) was championed by China and the world largest spender in health assistance, at a time when the U.S. was nowhere to be seen. Washington even halted the annual funding to the WHO during pandemic. Furthermore, not only it banned exports of commodities but also crucial lifesaving drugs, including raw material to produce COVID-19 vaccines. Therefore, China emerged as a global health leader in the absence of any significant U.S.'s role. China, which is alleged to be the origin of this pandemic, was also the first to beat it. After containing the virus at home, China began engaging in public diplomacy. It sent its medical teams to all corners of the world to assist health officials in mitigating and containing the virus, it aided low-income states by providing them testing kits, face masks, oxygen cylinders, and ventilators. More importantly, the Chinese experience of containing the virus through the policy of lockdowns was replicated all over the world. Whereas the U.S.'s own response to virus was grim and confused, which caused

distress in the masses. Meanwhile, it is also the most affected state in the world both in terms of financial losses and causalities. So, in the backdrop of these developments post pandemic, this study tries to explore whether China's rise economically and diplomatically pose any threat to the U.S. by applying the theory of "Thucydides Trap." It is a political concept developed by Graham Allison, an American political scientist. According to Allison, Thucydides Trap is attributed to the geopolitical struggle by a rising power against the established power in international system. The challenge is interpreted as a bid to become a new hegemon. In this paper, it is evaluated how China competed with the US in health sector globally to influence states, specifically in the global south.

This paper evaluates the role of China and the U.S. comparatively in GHD during COVID-19. It begins by describing global health diplomacy and its conceptual framework, analyzes the GHD and its definitional aspects, as well as how it evolved as a concept of human security. Furthermore, it also explains the "Thucydides Trap" as a theoretical construct here which later is evaluated keeping in view the China-US rivalry and whether the diplomatic competition could result in hard power maneuverings. After setting the theoretical roadmap of the paper, this research moves on to highlight the historical background where it has briefly narrated the GHD's history comparing both U.S.'s and China's roles in the world over the last few decades. Arriving at the crux, the current scenario is discussed and how both states have responded to the challenge of GHD post COVID-19 and winning the trust of other states. Furthermore, this research also discusses implications of COVID-19 in GHD paradigms of both China and the U.S as well as critically analyze both state's policies to make sense of their approaches. Lastly, it is concluded and recommendations are provided, respectively.

Global Health Diplomacy

There is no single and specific definition of Global health diplomacy (GHD). Various scholars have defined GHD depending on their perspectives; however, given the connection of diplomacy with health, it is not merely improving public health and health systems in the developing world, but also increasing the influence of donor states like the US and China in sectors such as politics, economy, and development

Vincanne Adams and Thomas Novotny define GHD as "a political change activity that meets the dual goals of improving global health while maintaining and strengthening international relations abroad, particularly in conflict areas and resource-poor environments."[1] On the other hand, Ilona Kickbusch et al. define GHD as "multi-level, multi-actor negotiation processes that shape and manage the global policy environment for health."[2] Akram Khazatzadeh-Mahani, Arne Ruckert , and Ronald Labonté have defined and explained the global health, its linkage with international health, and diplomacy in depth. For them, global health and international health are separate terms. The term international health focuses more on the aspects of cooperation among states on health systems. This is done to develop sustainable hospitals so that they can prevent diseases like polio, tuberculosis, and measles in the global south. Meanwhile, global health on the other hand deals with health issues those are worldwide and mostly focused on the causes and effects. In this context, the priority of the global health is provision of an equitable health system globally that can effectively respond to the vulnerable people. Khazatzadeh-Mahani, Ruckert, and Labonte defines global health "as the multilevel and multi-actor negotiations that shape the global policy environment for health."[3] Significantly, global health is used a mean to achieve socio-economic and political goals by the states as well. It is interesting to point out that while health issues remained an issue in diplomacy over the last century, however, the centralized importance of GHD is a recent phenomenon. The debates and response mechanism are not only limited to World Health Organization but is also included in the agenda of World Trade Organization.[4]

Ala Alwan states that these latest trends in diplomacy have made it necessary for the training of diplomats in GHD. As health issues have been interlinked with trade, security, and other development goals – therefore, technical level skills alone cannot resolve health issues globally. Rather, it is

[1]Vincanne Adams, Thomas E. Novotny, and Hannah Leslie. "Global health diplomacy," *Medical Anthropology* 27 (4) (2008): 315-323.
[2] Ilona Kickbusch, Gaudenz Silbers chmidt, and Paulo Buss. "Global health diplomacy: the need for new perspectives, strategic approaches and skills in global health," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 85 (2007): 230-232.
[3]Akram Khazatzadeh-Mahani, Arne Ruckert , and Ronald Labonté, "Global Health Diplomacy," In *The Oxford Handbook of Global Health Politics*, eds. Colin McInnes, Kelley Lee, and Jeremy Youde (London: Oxford University Press, 2018): 4.
[4] Ibid.

also political decision making, which can create better pathways for addressing global health challenges.[5] GHD is significant for sustainable health systems across the globe, as with effective application of GHD, health concerns can be linked to social, economic, and political issues. Thus, transforming the public health.[6] Alwan gave example of the Eastern Mediterranean region as a case study of global health diplomacy in action. As a context, response to Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), aid in health sector for populations in emergency situations, and actions to enhance immunity against communicable and non communicable diseases are crucial in the Middle East. Redressal of these challenges is dependent on the successful political negotiations to not only prevent regional spread of the diseases but also globally. For instance, polio eradication campaigns require a lot of political engagement in the Middle East as segments of population do not get vaccinated because of myths of impotence associated with the vaccine.[7]

GHD has transformed completely after the Cold War. In the multipolar world, there are multiple state and non-state actors who hold power and persuade states for specific actions. Health is significant in diplomacy, because diseases cross borders easily and negatively impact the environment as well as trade. Therefore, GHD's key scope is to improve the livelihood of peoples and poverty alleviation. With increasing role of diplomacy in health sector, it is no more limited to WHO. Thus, health issues are taken up at the UN, the EU platforms, G8, and G20, as well as at the World Trade Organization. More recently, academia, non-profit organizations, civil society members, and public at large are also included in GHD to govern the health issues.[8] According to the WHO's constitution introduced in 1946, it is stated that: good health not only means that there is no disease, but it means that individuals are mentally and socially fit as

[5] Ala Alwan, "Summary of the Third Seminar on Health Diplomacy," *World Health Organization*, Third Regional Seminar on Health Diplomacy, (Cairo, 2014) https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/Policy_Brief_2014_EN_15340.pdf?ua=1&ua=1&ua=1%20http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/health-diplomacy/index.html.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ilona Kickbusch, Graham Lister, Michaela Told, and Nick Drager, *Global Health Diplomacy: Concepts, Issues, Actors, Instruments, For and Cases* (New York: Springer, 2013): 2-5.

well.; they enjoy better life standard without any difference of color and race; universal health ensures peace and prosperity as well as address security issues; an individual state excelling in healthcare provides value to others too; importantly, there must not be indifference in provision of health services globally – particularly in infectious diseases.[9]Health diplomacy serves as a significant platform for discussions on international policy issues that affect and shape the world's health environment in a changing globalized world.[10]The importance of health in promoting sustainable development, peace, the decrease of poverty, social justice, and human rights is becoming more widely recognized.[11]

Interestingly, GHD has a link with power too. Power has always been interpreted in terms of hard or economic forces, but political scientist Joseph Nye developed the idea of soft power and distinguished between these two types of power. Hard power is the ability to reach one's goals through coercive actions or threats.)[12] Nye explained soft power as the "ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes which one wants through consent rather than coercion." According to Nye, the resources of soft power lie in the country's culture, political ideals and domestic and foreign policies in international politics.[13] Soft power gives a nation permission to practice dominant position over other nations, by consent, support and consensus. As a result, health diplomacy has evolved into a soft power instrument that plays an important and vital role in a state's influence over the other. Global health diplomacy has long been an important part of many countries foreign policy strategy, and the same is true of concerns on national security, commerce, and diplomacy.

This kind of diplomacy can be initiated by the official channels (by states) or through non-state actors (NGOs). As far as International Relations is concerned, the GHD remained at the periphery and was seldom part of the

[9] Ibid.
[10] World Health Organization, http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/health-diplomacy/index.html
[11]Ibid
[12] Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (1) (March 2008): 94-109, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699
[13] Priya Gauttam, Bawa Singh, and Jaspal Kaur, "COVID-19 and Chinese Global Health Diplomacy: Geopolitical Opportunity for China's Hegemony?" *Millennial Asia* 11(3) (October 12, 2020): 318–40.

general discourse of the discipline until after the cold war when human security filled the void created after the end of bipolarity.[14]

Disease does not recognize any international border and the pathogens that once took several months and years to transfer from one locality to another move at a fast pace in an urbanized and globalized world. Therefore, the importance of health in foreign policy has grown exponentially over the last century, as responding to global health has become a collective responsibility of all states in an international system rather than individual states.[15] The trillions dollar military-industrial complex of major international players in the COVID-19 pandemic could not defend people against the microbial enemy. Therefore, there is a dire need to spend more on health and include it in the foreign policy objectives.[16] The U.N. General Assembly adopted a global health resolution in 2008 to include health as a foreign policy aim rather than working on it merely as a humanitarian goal which the big players in the international system were doing throughout the 20th century.[17] For foreign policy officials, the economy and the security interests were paramount; hence they only considered staying ahead in these departments rather than focusing on public health. However, it is significant to mention that the institute of the WHO was constituted (7 April 1948, the day is now every year celebrated as health day) after world war II at the establishment of the United Nations, and it declared public health a fundamental human right.

At the international or global level, health-related concerns are framed as security threats that are used by different countries for their geopolitical objectives in international relations. As a result of this, the global health issues are also securitized. This perception makes it easy to

[14] Arne Ruckert, Ronald Labonté, Raphael Lencucha, Vivien Runnels, and Michelle Gagnon. "Global health diplomacy: a critical review of the literature." *Social Science & Medicine* 155 (2016): 61-72; Tanisha M. Fazal, "Health Diplomacy in Pandemical Times," *International Organization* 74(51) (December 2020): E78-E97. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000326.

[15] Sara E. Davies, Adam Kamradt-Scott, and Simon Rushton, *Disease Diplomacy: International Norms and Global Health Security* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015): 1.

[16] Fareed Zakaria, *Ten Lessons for a Post Pandemic World* (New York: Norton Press and Company, 2021).

[17] David F. Fidler, "Health in Foreign Policy: An Analytical Review," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 15(3) (March 2011): 11-29. DOI: 10.1080/11926422.2009.9673489.

understand that incorporating health issues within foreign policy goals of the rich states in the global north are part of their national security policies where threat perception is given more credence to the economic potential where these states can engage in trade with the states in the global south..[18] In terms of domestic or national level analysis, different stakeholders from the business world to civic organizations and from non-governmental organizations to research think tanks played a significant role in formulating aims of GHD in the contemporary world. Historically, these stake holders have been considered less active on foreign policy matters. With increased public role in foreign policy matters, specifically the health-related concerns, these stakeholders are gaining influence in shaping the foreign policy of a state. These stakeholders inspire foreign policy of many governments through direct and indirect engagements. Directly, they are invited to parliaments and official meetings of the executive for seeking their input. While indirectly, they build a public opinion through media and public seminars. These practices have become a standard operating procedure around the world.[19]

From an indusial level of analysis, "celebrity diplomacy" has become a new face of public diplomacy where movies and sports stars engage in shaping public opinion for attaining national interests. These celebrities can also be seen spreading awareness about global health issues requesting people to cooperate with institutes like WHO. For instance, Bono has urged the Western leaders to give more aid to eradicate AIDS from Africa.[20] Emma Thompson was employed by the London Mayor, Boris Johnson in 2015 as TB ambassador.[21]Meanwhile, in China, the famous singer Han Hong raised around USD 19 million in the wake of COVID-19 for Wuhan.[22]There is also a lot of money involved which comes from these

[18] Sara E. Davies, "Securitizing infectious disease." *International Affairs* 84(2) (2008): 295-313.
[19] James M. McCormick, ed. *The domestic sources of American foreign policy: insights and evidence* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).
[20]"Celebrity Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities," *Wilson Center*, (September 25, 2007), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/celebrity-diplomacy-challenges-and-opportunities.
[21] Terra Ornstein, "Using Celebrity Diplomacy to End Tuberculosis," *USC Center on Public Diplomacy*, (October 2, 2015), https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/using-celebrity-diplomacy-end-tuberculosis.
[22] Jian Xu and Elaine Jeffreys, "Celebrity Politics in Covid-19 China: "Celebrities Can't Save the Country," *University of Westminster Blogs*, (July 15, 2020).

celebrities contributing to different brands who partner with celebrities to make advertisement for their products which has the message associated with health awareness. Many celebrities also joined different non-governmental organizations as well to spread their message. A few others also became U.N. ambassadors, and some are individually involved as concerned global citizens to promote better health. Scholars believe that the interest in GHD related issues is because of the increased media coverage and personal activism. Furthermore, many influential leaders around the world also take up health issues as primary political objective too to gain public support.[23]

Conceptual Framework

Given these developments in the GHD over the last seven decades in general and the COVID-19 pandemic in particular, one gets an impression that health is now a significant tool of foreign policy, based on the criteria that GHD can also be used for attaining strategic, political, and economic goals. In this context, the theory of "Thucydides Trap" would evaluate, understand, and interpret whether the dimension of health security can lead to a potential clash between China and the U.S.?

Thucydides Trap is defined as the rise of one power injecting fear in the existing power of replacement which leads to the conflict. Thucydides explained his theory keeping in view the Peloponnesian Wars fought between the city-states of Athens and Sparta in the 5th century BCE. Athens was an emerging power then, and it challenged the existing power of Sparta, which resulted in a bloody war. Thucydides stated that in challenging the existing power, the rising power challenges the structures of existing power, which makes the conflict a rule rather than an exception. Thucydides put it that way: "It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable."[24] In the analysis section this research interprets whether this theory can be justified post-COVID-19 pandemic phase between the two powers of existing international system? Or is there any

https://blog.westminster.ac.uk/contemporarychina/celebrity-politics-in-covid-19-china-celebrities-cant-save-the-country/

[23] John T. Rourke, and Mark A. Boyer. *International politics on the world stage* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2008).

[24] Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

threat to the existing world order by China? These questions have been analyzed keeping in view the GHD and China's and the U.S.'s role in winning influence around various regions of the world generally by not specifically looking into a single region or bounding different regions as a case study. This article intends to analyze whether Thucydides Trap could be related to these two powers or not. These questions have been analyzed keeping in view the GHD and China's and the U.S.'s role in winning influence around various regions of the world generally by not specifically looking into a single region or bounding different regions as a case study

Historical Background

Over the last decade, it has been witnessed that hard power is declining, especially after Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2001, and Operation Desert Fox in Iraq in 2002, where objectives were not met even after invasion and spending trillions of dollars. Given the objections of human rights watch dogs and lack of interest by the public in military maneuvers, the soft power is taking over the hard power. Hence, among many other tools of soft power, health security offers major players a ground to exploit for strategic leverage in global south.

In the United States, health diplomacy was not practiced until 2000 at the state level, even though the NGOs kept on with their humanitarian work in Africa and other developing states like South Korea, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In Korea, the USAID spent around 7 million USD to enhance its healthcare system in 1970s.[25] Whereas, the developing states like Vietnam and Cambodia could not receive healthcare assistance until 1990s.At the state level, the first significant move to include health as a foreign policy tool was initiated by Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s. However, it could not meet with success, because at that time, the U.S. diplomats were more concerned with the threat of the Soviet Union, and most of their energies were consumed in countering Soviet disinformation and propagating American influence in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.[26] Physicians like Cahill have criticized pre 2000 role of the U.S. in health diplomacy in Africa. For him, it was meant for only politics, showing the public back home that America cared for the globe, however, the goals were

[25] USAID, "Korea Health Demonstration Project," (USAID, July 1982) https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNAAJ621.pdf.
[26] Fidler, "Health in Foreign Policy," 14.

short term, and the U.S. could not consolidate its missions despite spending millions of dollars for conflict-ridden communities [27]

Anyhow, health assistance was part of the U.S. containment policy even if it was not part of GHD framework. During the cold war era, the state department considered provision of health assistance to states in Europe, Asia and Latin American countries as a useful tool to counter Soviet rising influence. The health sector in fact witnessed severe competition between the Soviets and the Americans. The U.S. diplomats in the cold war used terminology like "crusade against diseases" to win over states in the above-mentioned regions. The U.S. propagated the idea that both communism and malaria were similar in kind, as both enslave people. It is stated that the reason for spending bilaterally rather than multilaterally in the cold war was because of the U.S's policy framework which thought of providing assistance technically through its own representatives rather than uplifting socio-economic potential of the host countries. It was believed that since developing countries lacked training and technological education therefore, the money must be invested through the U.S bodies.[28]

It was also witnessed in the cold war that the wives of the US diplomats also contributed in establishing clinics with local staff in regions such as Africa and Asia to help women and children who could not afford medicines and vaccines. These clinics were funded by the U.S. government under the USAID program. This was also one of very first instances of "people to people diplomacy" following the philosophy of "winning hearts and minds" of the people. In the late 1960s, when some Far East countries were against the U.S.'s military intervention in Vietnam, the American Women Association (AWA) was able to set up clinics and win good will of the people. For instance, when the U.S Ambassador Marshall Green was posted to Indonesia he was surrounded by the people and demanded him to

[27] K. M. Cahill, "Health and foreign policy: An American View," *Annals of Tropical Medicine & Parasitology* 91(7) (1997): 735-741.DOI: 10.1080/00034983.1997.11813197
[28] Marcos Cueto and Theodore M. Brown, "The Cold War and Eradication," in *The World Health Organization: A History*, ed. Marcos Cueto, Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, Fiocruz, Rio de Janeiro and Theodore M. Brown (London: Cambridge University Press, 2019): 86-90.

leave their country. However, still his wife was able to garner support for the AWA.[29]

However, post-cold war, specifically after 2000, the U.S. started to give health a status of strategic foreign policy tool. It was linked to national security, and the U.S. became concerned with the threats of pandemics and biological warfare.[30] The human security aspect of the foreign policy was also complemented by the increased globalization that took states to interdependency rather than competition which was witnessed in the bipolar world. With the globalization, there was a threat of the spread of communicable diseases such as influenza, HIV, SARS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis, among many other pathogens. Therefore, health was given a strategic significance.[31] The U.S. spends most in the world on GHD as it takes it as a component of national security and assists states in the global south. The U.S. does it to safeguard its own population from diseases as well as extremism, stalling migration and less aid in humanitarian assistance. Its policy is, better health results in growth and economic development in underdeveloped states.[32] In the U.S., the State Department working in cahoots with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has taken the task to provide health assistance for poorer states in the global south.[33] However, most of the US GHD was related to bilateral programs carried out through USAID rather than a multilateral approach. It is also interesting to note that the U.S. only recently realized that it is losing strategic leverage in global south, specifically in Africa, when it comes to

[29] Alex Penler, "An Old Frontier: What Cold War Women Can Tell Us About Global Health and Vaccine Diplomacy," *LSE Blogs*, (March 3, 2021). https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lseih/2021/03/03/an-old-frontier-what-cold-war-women-can-tell-us-about-global-health-and-vaccine-diplomacy/

[30] Fidler, "Health in Foreign Policy," 14.

[31] Ibid, 17-19.

[32] Rebecca Katz, Sarah Kornblet , Grace Arnold , Eric Lief ,and Julie E. Fischer, "Defining Health Diplomacy: Changing Demands in the Era of Globalization," *The Milbank Quarterly: A Multidisciplinary Journal of Population Health and Health Policy* 89(3) (2011): 503-523.

[33] Sabastian Kevany, "Global Health Diplomacy, 'Smart Power', and the New World Order," *Global Public Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice* 9 (7) (2014): 787-807. DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2014.921219.

health – whereas the Chinese are way ahead in funding health-related programs in the global south.[34]

China on the other hand, since its inception in 1949, is engaged in GHD. In the 1950s and 1960s, it sent 6,500 medical personnel to over 40 countries as well as funded more than 20 medical institutions around the world. One of the key regions for receiving Chinese attention in GHD programs was the African continent. Chinese GHD investment in Africa also reflects in the fact that over the issue of Taiwan, 26 African countries supported China at the UN by voting in its favor in 1971. It is also significant to mention here that China helped Africa at a time when China itself was financially not that strong.[35]At that time, the key driving factor behind the health diplomacy initiatives was to forge friendly relations with these countries. Historically, China has been a key contributor to global health owing to its own large population. The Maoist health model of the 1970s improved the health status of about 23% of the global population. The success of this model influenced the WHO's agenda too. Consequently, WHO declared in 1978 that "health for all" could be achieved through primary health care in 2000.[36]

Most of China's foreign aid was spent in building healthcare facilities in the recipient countries in Africa and other poor Asian countries. They established hospitals specifically dedicated to treat malaria patients in Africa.[37] Only in Africa, by the end of 2009, China established around 100 hospitals, which is now increased to more than 130. By 2006, the Chinese spending in Africa's health sector stood at 35 million dollars, which

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[34] Mark P, Lagon, and Rachel Sadoff, "America Must Not Allow Africa to Go Viral in Africa," *The National Interest*, (May 1, 2020) https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america-must-not-allow-china-go-viral-africa-150566; Emma Louise-Anderson, "African health diplomacy: obscuring power and leveraging dependency through shadow diplomacy," *International Relations* 32(2) (June 2018): 194-217. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117817751595.

[35] Maddalena Procopio, "China's Health Diplomacy in Africa: Pitfalls Behind the Leading Role," *Italian Institute of Political and International Studies*, (April 7, 2020) https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/chinas-health-diplomacy-africa-pitfalls-behind-leading-role-25694

[36]Yanzhong Huang. "Pursuing health as foreign policy: the case of China." *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 17, no. 1 (2010): 105-146.

[37] Aizen J. Marrogi and Saadoun al-Dulaimi, "*Medical Diplomacy in Achieving U.S. Global Strategic Objectives*," (National Defense University Press, July 1, 2014) https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/577539/medical-diplomacy-in-achieving-us-global-strategic-objectives/

exponentially increased to 150 million dollars in less than a decade in 2014. On Malaria treatment the Chinese spent 26 million dollars. In the Ebola outbreak, the Chinese not only sent 1000 health workers but also contributed 120 million dollars as an aid in Africa and another 135 million dollars to UN organizations as part of response mechanism. In Ethiopia, China completed a hospital that cost around 30 million dollars. It is stated that China wants trade with Africa and by investing in public health they are winning hearts and minds of the common people.[38] The spending of China on GHD can be gauged by the fact that since 2013 China's involvement in GHD programs globally has witnessed the growth of 121%.[39]

Nonetheless, it is crucial to point out that China's early international cooperation on health was limited to socialist countries only. As a Cultural Revolution strategy in the mid-1960s, China made medical assistance a part of extending its political influence to the Far East and African countries. Special teams were formulated to assist health systems in the recipient countries in the aforementioned regions. It is also stated that these medical teams were used by China to gain strategic leverage in the regions and had economic goals to it as well. By not interfering in domestic politics of these countries China was able to win trust, thereby winning the market as well. Fast forward to 2003, the emergence of the SARS epidemic is considered a watershed moment in the development of China's public health and international development strategies. The SARS spread was not limited to only China but it was reported widely from the ASEAN countries as well. The Chinese helped these states in research and development for preparing a better response to respiratory diseases in the region. The SARS episode helped Chinese leadership in understanding the significance of public health crises in the shaping of its international image. Consequently, Beijing reemphasized the inclusion of health cooperation in its international development agenda and started working with multilateral institutions like

[38] Long Wang and Joshua Bateman, "China's Medical Aid in Africa," *The Diplomat*, (March 14, 2018), https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/chinas-medical-aid-in-africa/

[39] Lewis Hussain and Gerald Bloom, "Understanding China's Growing Involvement in Global Health and Managing Processes of Change," *Globalization and Health* 16(39) (May 2020), https://globalizationandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12992-020-00569-0.

WHO.[40] This evolution was reflected well in the Chinese response to COVID-19 pandemic where it not only successfully contained the disease within mainland China but also started exporting vaccines both in aid as well as selling it to governments and private entities.

Post Covid Situation

Pandemics cause havoc in global health systems, overburden them and cause panic among the population, but they also enable states to enhance their foreign policy goals keeping in view their national interest.[41] However, as per the WHO regulations, states must provide health assistance through their platform which means that medical assistance must be provided for the collective good of the humanity and not used for achieving strategic leverage. Moving away from health institutes in providing a global response bilaterally or unilaterally, impacts their usefulness and performance for the next pandemic.[42] COVID-19 was a surprise for many developed and developing states alike. Yet, it caused more damage to the U.S. than any other state in the world, both in terms of economic and human losses. More than half a million people died in the U.S. as of now, as per Center for Disease Control and Prevention[43], whereas the economic cost is estimated by *the Economist* to be more than U.S. dollar ten trillion.[44]The Covid 19 has affected220 countries and territories, more than 3.2 million deaths, killing more than half a million in the U.S. alone and around 4600 in China, till date 9 May 2021[45]

The COVID-19 arrived in the U.S. in 2020 the year of Presidential elections, therefore, creating a divide where Donald Trump the former U.S. President termed it a Chinese virus, thus racializing that disease, which not

[40] Tang Bei, "A Brief History of Chinese 'Health Diplomacy'," *Sixth Tone*, (May 20, 2020). https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1005687/a-brief-history-of-chinese-health-diplomacy

[41] Fazal, "*Health Diplomacy in Pandemical Times*"

[42] Ibid.

[43] "National Center for Health Statistics," *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*, (April 21, 2021), https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid19/index.htm,

[44] "What is the economic cost of COVID-19?" *The Economist*, (January 7, 2021), https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2021/01/09/what-is-the-economic-cost-of-covid-19.

[45]"COVID Live Update - *Worldometer*," Worldometers.info, (2021), https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/

only impacted the U.S.'s internal response to the disease but also greatly affected its global multibillion-dollar health assistance. Consequently, President Trump halted funding (400 million dollars annual) for the WHO alleging that it colluded with China and did not inform the U.S. in time.[46] Furthermore, as far as the mitigation and containment of the virus are concerned, the U.S. failed at both counts; it was an atmosphere of political divide within the country. The Trump administration neither listened to health officials nor did it go into lockdown like China. The global best practices as advocated by the WHO, for instance, masking up, maintaining social distancing, and staying at home, were ignored by the public as well as authorities which resulted in a wide scale spread, thereby causing more causalities.[47]

After the new administration of the Democrats under President Joe Biden coming in, not only did the U.S. resumed the WHO funding, but it also allocated more than dollar four billion in the global fight against COVID-19, specifically aiding states in the global south. At the national level, Americans stood as the most generous country in the world by giving more than 4.9 billion dollars to various IGOs and NGOs to fight the pandemic.[48] Yet another significant development with the arrival of the Democrats witnessed allocating around 11 billion dollars to eradicate COVID-19 disease. While most of that aid would be distributed within the U.S. under American Rescue Plan, yet the U.S. has committed to fund WHO's run vaccine program with 4 billion dollars by the end of 2022. With these new developments, the U.S. is filling the gap, the Trump administration created.[49] Previously, The Trump administration in the first half of year 2020 only contributed 775 million dollars globally to fight COVID-19. The aid was distributed through various bilateral programs such

[46] "Coronavirus: US to halt funding to WHO, says Trump," *BBC News*, (April 15, 2020), https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52289056.

[47] Nora Kenworthy, Adam D. Koon, and Emily Mendenhall, "On symbols and scripts: The politics of the American COVID-19 response," *Global Public Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice* (March 2021): 1-15, DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2021.1902549; David P. Carter & Peter J. May, "Making sense of the U.S. COVID-19 pandemic response: A policy regime perspective," *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 42, no. 2 (2020): 266-277, DOI: 10.1080/10841806.2020.1758991.

[48] "Corona Virus Disease 2019," *US Department of State*, (April 22, 2021), https://www.state.gov/coronavirus/#international-aid-relations.

[49] "USAID'S COVID-19 Response," USAID, last modified May 20, 2021, https://www.usaid.gov/coronavirus

as USAID, Economic and Support Fund, and Migration and Refugee Assistance.[50] Apart from all these efforts, withdrawal from WHO at peak pandemic time, showed a destructive image of a global leader rather than constructive image which was critically analyzed worldwide.

In contrast to the U.S., ever since the outbreak of COVID-19, China has availed the global pandemic as an opportunity to portray a benevolent picture of itself.[51] In this regard, Beijing has effectively utilized its health diplomacy to offer medical aid to African countries. The Chinese support to African countries included the export of facemasks and dispatching of a medical team. Moreover, experts from more than 30 countries interacted with Chinese counterparts on how to effectively deal with the pandemic. Similarly, Asian countries have remained a crucial part of China's global health diplomacy. Chinese medical experts have visited several ASEAN countries to advise them on COVID-19 mitigation and containment. Furthermore, material aid has also been provided by the Chinese government and private businessmen to several ASEAN countries. Moreover, the South Asian states such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives, especially Pakistan have been the biggest recipients of the tones of medical aid, including testing kits, personal protective equipment, masks, ventilator and more than 2 million vaccines as a gift. Beijing extended humanitarian support to Tehran and urged Washington to lift sanctions against Tehran. China even offered help to India, as it is witnessing an extreme surge regarding infections, for help when the U.S. defended its restrictions to export raw material of Corona vaccine to other countries to meet its domestic needs first. The spokesperson of China's foreign ministry told media that, "China is willing to provide assistance to India against the latest COVID-19 rebound in the country, which has caused a temporary shortage of medical materials,"[52]

During the early wave of Covid, the European continent remained a battlefield for influence between China and the United States. China

[50] "U.S. Contributions to the Global Fight Against COVID-19," *U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka*, (May 1, 2020), https://lk.usembassy.gov/update-the-united-states-is-continuing-to-lead-the-response-to-covid-19/.

[51] Priya Gauttam, Bawa Singh, and Jaspal Kaur. "COVID-19 and Chinese Global Health Diplomacy: Geopolitical Opportunity for China's Hegemony?." *Millennial Asia* 11(3), (2020): 318-340.

[52] "China 'Willing' to Help Virus-Ravaged India," *Aa.com.tr*, (2021).

extended its medical and financial support to European countries. Meanwhile, the U.S.'s response on the other hand was grim which changed public perception negatively in Europe. This was more evidenced in Germany as more people showed negative opinions about the administration of Donald Trump.[53] During the early phase of pandemic in 2020, apart from governmental support, Chinese private entities like Huawei and Jack Ma Foundation also offered medical aid to several European countries. Several Eastern European countries appreciated Chinese support and criticized the E.U. and the U.S for its delayed response and inert bureaucratism, etc. States like Serbia and Hungary started vaccinating their population by Chinese provided Sinopharm vaccine. President Xi Jinping of China announced more cooperation in vaccination drive of the Eastern European states. The Chinese President also assured Central and Eastern European (CEE) states of more imports of its products to the Chinese markets covering 170 billion dollars.[54] However, as the administration changed in the U.S., the new President immediately started recovering the relations in Europe. The state department also raised concerns over the growing Chinese GHD activities in Europe. It stated that though the U.S respects national interests of the European states, however, it is a matter of concern for the U.S. the way China is using multilateral organizations for strategic leverage.[55] Though European states are using vaccines produced by American companies like Pfizer and Moderna, yet the magnitude of aid was not as big as Marshall Plan of the cold war. This was because the U.S. itself was going through a tough situation at home. The new administration of President Biden however has given two billion dollars in the WHO's COVAX program.[56]

Impacts of GHD on Global Health Systems

There will be long term implications of GHD on post-COVID-19 scenario, especially in the management of vaccine and giving them as a

[53] Noah Barkin, "In the Post-Pandemic Cold War, America Is Losing Europe," *Foreign Policy*, (May 19, 2020, https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/19/coronavirus-pandemic-europe-opinion-polls-united-states-china-losing/

[54] Nike Ching, "US, China Compete Over Vaccine, Post-pandemic Recovery in Europe," *Voice of America*, (February 17, 2021), https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/us-china-compete-over-vaccine-post-pandemic-recovery-europe.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Katherine Gypson, "US Set to Send $11B in International Aid in Latest COVID Bill," *Voice of America*, March 10, 2021, https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/us-set-send-11b-international-aid-latest-covid-bill.

public good to less resourceful countries in the global south who cannot afford to purchase one. So far, the vaccines have been for regional use mostly produced and administered in the global North. The disparity in vaccination can be gauged by the fact that only one percent of the global vaccines have been given to the African continent.[57] In 2020, it was reported that only 13% of the world population in global north had purchased more than 50% of the vaccines.[58] In April 2021, the WHO chief reported that more than 80% of the COVID-19 vaccine doses went to the rich countries in the global north.[59] As far as the U.S. is concerned, it banned the export of the vaccines produced in the U.S. or produced by the firms it has paid for, for instance, AstraZeneca, currently, the U.S. has extra 300 million vaccine doses which it is not using, a decision which is criticized by many countries who are willing to buy those. Furthermore, the U.S. has also imposed a ban on the raw materials used in vaccine production, which can highly risk another billion dosses by May 2021.[60] The WHO's head lamented the fact that inequality in vaccine distribution is "not only a moral outrage, but economically and epidemiologically self-defeating."[61] The WHO has initiated its own program of COVAX (aiding poor countries in the

[57] Peter Beaumont, "Vaccine Inequality Exposed by Dire Situation in World's Poorest Nations," *The Guardian*, (May 30, 2021), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/30/vaccine-inequality-exposed-by-dire-situation-in-worlds-poorest-nations.

[58] Nivedita Saksena, "Global Justice and the COVID-19 Vaccine: Limitations of the Public Goods Framework," *Global Public Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice* (March 2021): 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2021.1906926.

[59] "Unequal Vaccine Distribution Self-Defeating, World Health Organization Chief Tells Economic and Social Council's Special Ministerial Meeting," *United Nations*, (April 16, 2021), https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/ecosoc7039.doc.htm.

[60] Noah Weiland and Rebecca Robbins, "The U.S. Is Sitting on Tens of Millions of Vaccine Doses the World Needs," *The New York Times*, (March 11, 2021), https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/11/us/politics/coronavirus-astrazeneca-united-states.html; "American Export Controls Threaten to Hinder Global Vaccine Production," *The Economist*, (April 17, 2021), https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2021/04/17/american-export-controls-threaten-to-hinder-global-vaccine-production.

[61] "Unequal Vaccine Distribution," *United Nations*.

vaccination drive). It aims to produce 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine by the end of year 2021.[62][Comment: Correction made]

For attaining the goodwill and trust of the less resourceful states, vaccine diplomacy would decide the winner among China and the U.S. in post-COVID-19 health diplomacy. It seems China is already winning it. China has so far donated millions of its vaccine doses to low-income and middle-income states. Till April 2021, half of the Chinese produced vaccines were exported, while none by the U.S. during this time.[63]

Another significant step China took post-COVID-19 was to move forward the idea of the "Health Silk Road" in a conversation between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Italian Prime Minister. The health silk road is part of its GHD campaign and designed metaphorically on the routes of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), where Chinese embassies will locate the areas of cooperation while the BRI companies will be delivering the health goods. The term gained currency in the pandemic; however, president Xi used it for the first time in Geneva in 2017 when he visited for a health summit and suggested the need to initiate policies of public health around BRI states. It serves two goals for China, first, it emerges as a GHD leader post-pandemic and second, it will rebound the economic activity stalled during pandemic along BRI corridors under the guise of health support.[64]

Scholars have remained divided about the real intentions behind China emerging as the leading global response nation against the COVID-19. Some scholars believe that the key reason for doing so was because China maintained a slow response in alerting WHO about the true extent of the grim situation in the Chinese city of Wuhan. To offset the global anger

[62] "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Vaccine Access and Allocation," *World Health Organization*, (February 19, 2021), https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccine-access-and allocation?adgroupsurvey={adgroupsurvey}&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIqs_0xbmG8QIVkZftCh2_Vg_6EAAYASABEgLyuPD_BwE.

[63] Leng Shumei, "China Provides Vaccine Aid to 53 Developing Countries, Exports to 22," *The Global Times*, (February 8, 2021), https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202102/1215285.shtml; Patrick Atack, "China Exports Half its Vaccine Production: the UK and U.S., Almost None. Chart," *CGTN*, (April 1, 2021), https://newseu.cgtn.com/news/2021-04-01/China-exports-half-its-vaccines-the-UK-and-U-S-almost-none-Chart-Z3YKzBnOnK/index.html.

[64] Kirk Lancaster, Michael Rubin, and Mira Rapp-Hooper, "Mapping China's Health Silk Road," *Council on Foreign Relations*, (April 10, 2020), https://www.cfr.org/blog/mapping-chinas-health-silk-road..

for its low response, it is believed that China viewed the COVID-19 as a strategic opportunity for expanding its global leadership posture. It also allowed Beijing to expand its health diplomacy initiative. Prior to COVID-19, China's health diplomacy initiatives allowed it to emerge as a benevolent global leader in several African, Asian, and Latin American countries. By providing medical support to several countries during the ongoing pandemic, China was able to cultivate a perception that it is an expert on pandemic management and global health in addition to goods provider.

Critical Analysis

GHD can be utilized to achieve global health objectives by giving it as importance in national foreign policies as security is given. The COVID-19 pandemic, without a doubt the biggest crisis the world has faced since World War II, has created a very conducive environment for China's public diplomacy, when the United States is still trying to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in its domains. Though it is important to point out that China has used the ongoing global pandemic to softly project its image as a global leader, it is equally important to remember that Beijing was able to do because Washington, under the Trump administration, left a major vacuum in leading global response against COVID-19. Trump administration promoted xenophobic and nationalistic tendencies during the COVID-19, while China effectively used vaccine diplomacy to improve its strained relations with several countries. Moreover, China's exemplary response has allowed the leaning of public perception in favor of authoritarian leaders. However, it is essential to remember that no other country with authoritarian leadership has demonstrated an effective response against the pandemic apart from China. On the contrary, democratic countries were able to formulate a better and quicker response to mitigate and contain the virus.

Significantly, the emergence of COVID-19 has increased the importance of health diplomacy in the foreign policy of any country. It will continue to remain an effective soft power component of any country's foreign policy for years to come. The China-led BRI provides Beijing with an opportunity to launch a health diplomacy corridor as part of the multi-billion-dollar corridor project. The key functions of the health corridor, which is also known as "health silk road" (HSR) is promotion of health cooperation, giving medical aid, training healthcare workers, exchanging

modern medical technologies, and fighting diseases like TB, Malaria, AIDS. The HSR also intends to share information regarding epidemics to mitigate them in time. The objective of the HSR is to uplift the health standards of countries along the BRI, matching that of the developed world by 2030.[65]

However, it must be kept in mind that the administration has changed in the U.S., the political divider has been defeated, and an inclusivist Biden administration has won. And soon after assuming office, not only he reversed the Trump administration's hawkish policies but he also got back into various international platforms like WHO and Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Furthermore, the U.S. has started relief packages of around ten billion dollars both at the state and national level. Though its vaccine policy is still counted as protectionism, it is expected it would listen to the international voices and lift the ban on the exports of raw materials to speed up the processing of the vaccines.

The world needs a GHD based on cooperation and public good, which requires collective approaches rather than politics of competition. It is significant to mention that in the current globalized world, there is the least chance of conflicts between major powers because of the connectivity of international trade and regulations of international institutions, and China and the US are major trade partners as well. Furthermore, the public interconnectivity and socio-economic development has also lessened the chance to approach foreign policy through the prism of classical realism. The new Biden administration has recently invited Chinese counterpart President XI to a climate conference held virtually at the end of in April 2021. Therefore, the GHD can be only exploited for mutual gains through multilateral cooperation rather than for strategic leverage through bilateral funding.

As far as Thucydides' Trap is concerned, both China and the U.S. have avoided falling into it. While the strategic competition for influence and resources will continue between the two powers for the long time to come, it is not expected both will meet in an actual conflict involving militaries. There are multiple reasons to arrive at this analysis. First, both states are nuclear-capable which has created a balance of power, and any war simply means Mutual Assured Destruction. Second, both powers are

[65] Cao Jiahan, "Towards a Health Silk Road: China's Proposals for Global Health Cooperation," *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2020): 19-35.

striving for dominance in a world order mutually agreed along with three other Permanent states (France, Russia, and the United Kingdom) of the United Nations Security Council. Third, the element of globalization has not only bypassed the states in global trade but the populations as well; therefore, any potential conflict at the world stage disrupts those channels, which will potentially be contested by the public. Fourth, the era of ideologies and nationalism seems to be a thing of the past; even states have started to focus more on the geo-economic aspect of the international system rather than geo-politics and geo-strategy – even though the neoclassical realism still finds it impractical to pursue hard power for achieving military ends, however, the international system is not dictated by them. It is a contested system under the auspices of international institutions where no specific worldview is dominant. As a result, states prefer cooperation than engulfing themselves in conflicts. Fifth, China and the U.S. are not bounded in a limited region and striving for control over the other like in ancient Greece. It is a global arena with stakes and cost too high to make an armed conflict even a remote possibility.

In the current situation, the rivalry between China and the U.S. is expected to continue. However, it cannot go beyond strategic and tactical maneuvers of economic sanctions, diplomatic verbosity and forming alliances. Graham Allison in *Destined for War,* by studying the history of the last 500 years reveals, that there were 16 times when rising powers challenged established powers, and 12 out of them ended in war, and four were not ended in war but rather had peaceful transition of power. After the establishment of the U.N. in the late 1940s, the peaceful transition is the norm. The US itself became a global leader in the presence of multiple winners of World War II; it emerged because others were exhausted. Similarly, post-1950s, there was a cold war between the former Soviet Union and the U.S. for nearly five decades, the world was in bipolarity, but the two major powers never went into an armed conflict. Post-Soviet Union, China has emerged as an economic power, but it too needs the current system of free trade to exploit in the globalized world. Notably, the interdependent nature of world politics and economy prevents major conflicts and instead are tackled through the U.N. Same is the case with current health crises. No matter how much the U.S. blames China for the pandemic, again, the health sector would remain interdependent, and the

states would need each other to defeat the COVID-19. Therefore, cooperation and multilateral engagements in a multipolar environment supervised by international institutions seems the norm of the contemporary era, which cannot be related to ancient Greece of Thucydides.

The GHD of the U.S. under the Trump administration was disastrous for the health security of the entire globe. He not only halted the funding of the WHO but also continuously blamed China for the pandemic, which created a political divide exploited by the far-right groups in the western states. It is significant to mention that even during this political divide, the Trump administration could not move much into the hard power zone apart from banning operations of certain Chinese technology companies in the U.S. The Chinese, on the other hand did not resort to any hawkish policies and kept moving by taking the WHO in the loop in their response to the pandemic. It is also important to mention that had it been the ancient times, and a state rising as an economic power – having enough military capability to subdue the weaker states along its frontiers, would have gone for the hard power and taken full advantage of the weaknesses of the existing power. The U.S. and the western states in the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic were going through a similar situation, but the Chinese remained focused on rebounding their economy rather than entrenching themselves in geopolitical and geo-strategic arenas.

Conclusion

For GHD to become a useful tool of cooperation between the states, it is crucial that trust is built between the US and China. The motivation behind the GHD must be addressing health challenges in the developing world rather than influencing states for political and economic objectives. A key component of the GHD is development of health systems in the global south, so that individual states can cope up with health challenges themselves – as diseases like COVID-19 see no boundaries and impact the entire globe. Thus, both the US and China need to cooperate on the response mechanism in case of future health emergencies under the auspices of international institutions like WHO. In this context, vaccination of the population universally is the need of the hour without the bias of vaccine superiority. Furthermore, in its working, GHD must seek to enhance improved communications and international trade, along with stabilizing the low income and cash-starved states who cannot cope up with the virus

alone.[66]In a competition scenario between the U.S. and China during COVID-19, there are three significant criteria, which resulted in the US's slow response toward COVID-19. First, the U.S. took most of the brunt from COVID-19 in the first wave, and hence faced internal destabilization. As a result, its global health diplomacy lagged in the initial phase of COVID-19.Second, after President Biden took office in 2021, a massive vaccination drive, along with providing stimulus packages to the public started, however only internally in the U.S. During this time, the division was witnessed over vaccines – termed as Chinese and Western vaccines. Interestingly, the Western states made it mandatory to have only Western vaccines like Pfizer, Moderna, and Oxford's Astra Zeneca, even for the travelers from Asia and Africa. Third factor was health assistance in shape of medical aid (health staff training and vaccine aid) and financial assistance to the states in the global south, impacted most by the COVID-19. As far as China was concerned, the key factors that led to its success in health diplomacy were following: first, Beijing extended medical support to even those countries with which it had strained relationships. Second, Beijing utilized the HSR during COVID-19, and sent medical assistance teams to train health officials in developing states in Africa, South Asia, Central Asia, the ASEAN states, and the Middle East. This was done as per the objectives of the HSR, and most countries were also part of BRI. By doing this, Beijing reiterated that HSR was meant for human development by spending on the health of the population. It is also significant to note that China itself was tackling the COVID-19 just like the US, however, its medical assistance was swift. Third, China provided free COVID-19 vaccines produced in China to the HSR countries, which helped in vaccinating millions of people who could not afford vaccines. These factors boosted China's goodwill in the recipient countries, specifically in the Eurasian belt, continental Africa, the Middle East, and South Asian countries. In other words, the health diplomacy initiative undertaken by China was to act as a breakthrough in normalizing relations with such countries. Thus, to sum up the discussion, China led the response to the pandemic while the U.S. trailed behind.

[66]Kevany, "Global Health Diplomacy" 799.

Recommendations

It is recommended that GHD must be utilized for cooperation and mutual coexistence, where peoples' lives are improved by investing in their health. Therefore, following steps are significant to provide a swift response in future health emergencies around the globe.

China and GHD

- China successfully initiated vaccine drive in HSR countries during COVID-19 pandemic. The future plan of action requires establishing of scientific research centers to address health issues of individual states. It is also necessary that China keep delivering cheap vaccines to achieve universal vaccination in HSR countries.
- China must also cooperate with the U.S. in order to minimize the trust deficit between the two. GHD can ease a lot of tension between the two – and importantly, health must not be politicized.

U.S. and GHD

- As far as the U.S. is concerned, it must start investing in multilateral spending in health programs through international institutions like the WHO and through GHD programs to reach more regions in the global south.
- As major international player, it is expected of the U.S. to play a role in emergency situations like COVID-19 too by sending medical assistance teams to train, sharing scientific experience, and providing medical aid.
- It also needs to opt a pragmatic approach with regard to China in health diplomacy so that element of competition is reduced between the two.

International Institutes

- Localized Vaccines initiatives are not fruitful. Hence there is a need to make globalized vaccines through international institutes, which can be used by all without political gimmicks, as the Biden administration recently supported the WTO decision to waive off protection rights.
- Institutes like WHO must encourage developed states to increase donations to the Global Fund; with recent changes in the Global

Fund's leadership and financial system, donors would need to exert more effort.

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TEST OF NEOCLASSICAL REALISM TO EXPLAIN REASONS OF U.S. WITHDRAWAL (2021) FROM AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract

Smithsonian magazine (Jan-Feb) 2019 edition published facts about U.S. military intrusion in 14 countries including Afghanistan, as a consequence of the 9/11, 2001 attacks on its soil. U.S. invasion and its following bleak strategy raise questions on the rationale of this decision because Afghanistan had never been that powerful and capable of posing a security threat to U.S. Foreign invasion and following withdrawal that is pledged to be completed 9/11, 2021 have its specific reasons as well as implications in the region that need to be explored. Hence, the pretext of military invasion on the territory of Afghanistan and maintaining it for two decades is not very strong. However, after this long military presence the U.S. finally decided to withdraw from the state that could be strategically important. Little scholarly work has been done to explain the reasons of withdrawal of superpower from a small country after a long-time presence. South Asia is one of the important regions to study for several reasons firstly considerable size of the region's population, strategic location, contribution to the productive capacity of the world, and variations in political systems. The theory of neoclassical realism better explains the role of a domestic political system to distort the pursuit of security. It focuses on the behaviour of the United States in deciding on withdrawal. This study addresses a key research question that is, why the United States, being a superpower willingly withdraws its military presence from a much smaller country, Afghanistan that could have a strategic value.

Keywords: U.S., Peace, Afghanistan, Power Transition, Withdrawal Strategy, South Asia

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Introduction

Superpowers of the 20th century used to dominate certain areas or countries to fulfill their national interests of expansionism. And all of it is a part of the Great Game and power politics. It was initially a political and diplomatic confrontation between British Empire and the Russian empire over Afghanistan and neighboring states in Asia. Afghanistan appeared as a significant U.S. foreign policy alarm in 2001, when the United States, in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, led a military campaign against Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban government that allegedly protected and supported it. In the paramount of twenty years, United States has suffered over 22,000 military casualties (including around 2,400 fatalities) in Afghanistan. U.S. government is eager to withdraw from what Joe Biden said in his speech "America's Longest war". Further, he claims to withdraw from the remaking of other countries. The study attempts to explain the possible reasons for the withdrawal of forces of the United States from Afghanistan. Neoclassical realism better explains the domestic reasons for the withdrawal of any empire/superpower from the occupied state.

U.S.Invasionin Afghanistan

Since October 2001 the United States and Allied forces have been operating in Afghanistan. Initially, the military action, which was considered a defense under the UN Charter, was carried out by the US under Operation Enduring Freedom. NATO had just submitted its joint defense clause to Article V on September 12, 2001. In December 2001 the UN authorized the deployment of the 5,000-strong International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to deploy in the region, and in Kabul, the purpose of providing security and support in rebuilding the country. While the UN was in power, ISAF continued as a unified coalition. The operation of US terrorists under Operation Enduring Freedom continued to operate differently. In August 2003 NATO took command of ISAF. Over the next decade, and strengthened by the transformed and expanded UN mandate, ISAF operations spread across the country and shifted from security and stability to anti-emergency services.[1]

At its peak, in 2011, ISAF had 132,000 forces with troops from 50 NATO and its allies. The number of troops varied according to the security situation in the region. On 31 December 2014 anti-unity activities, including the US Operation Enduring Freedom, came to an end. On 1 January 2015, the Afghan National Forces took up a security case in Afghanistan and NATO and moved to a new non-combat organization, called Resolute Support. The

[1]Claire Mills, (2021) accessed on 8/19/2021, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9241/CBP-9241.pdf

main function of the Resolute Support has been to support the Afghan National Security Forces. Operation Enduring Freedom was replaced by the US Operation Freedoms Sentinel, which supported Resolute Support but also continued to freely fight terrorism in Afghanistan (approximately 2,000 workers).

U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan

In 2011, President Barack Obama announced that the US would withdraw from Afghanistan in late 2014, completing Operation Enduring Freedom. Because the Americans did not support the war, and Obama is under pressure from lawmakers, especially Democrats, to reduce US forces in Afghanistan. Although a large number of US troops were withdrawn in 2014 and NATO's International Security Assistance Force was depleted, 9,800 U.S. troops remained stationed inside Afghanistan during Operation Freedom's Sentinel, which was part of NATO's successor Resolute Support Mission. In the summer of 2017, with the official number of 8,400 U.S. troops serving in Afghanistan, President Donald Trump gave U.S. military authority the mandate to increase the number of troops in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan without first seeking a formal agreement with the white house.

On August 30, 2017, the Ministry of Defense revealed that there are more troops in Afghanistan than ever before. In September 2017, Trump officials began sending more than 3,000 troops to Afghanistan, bringing the number of US troops to Afghanistan to more than 14,000. When General Austin "Scott" Miller took over the reins of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan in September 2018, 15,000 US troops were deployed. In October 2019, after the abrupt end of peace talks with the Taliban last month, General Miller announced that the US military had been reduced to 13,000 within a year as a result of a double decision by US command in Kabul.[2]

In February 2019 at that time U.S. President Donald Trump announced he would take America out of “endless wars”. On February 29, 2020, American and Taliban leaders signed an agreement aimed at being the first step in Afghanistan's peace agreement. There have been major problems with the agreement, such as the failure to involve the Afghan government in negotiations. However, key provisions of the agreement include the US pledge to withdraw all American and foreign troops from Afghanistan, the Taliban's commitment to prevent al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations from using Afghanistan to intimidate the United States and its allies, and the promise of both sides to support peace talks. of Afghanistan. By the year

[2] *CNN politics*, (2020), accessed on 8/20/2021. https://edition.cnn.com/2020/11/17/politics/afghanistan-iraq-withdrawal-pentagon/index.html ,.

2020, the United States withdrew its troops from nearly 14,000 earlier this year. On November 17, 2020, Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller announced that the United States will deploy troops in Afghanistan to approximately 2,500 troops in January 2021. At the end of President Trump's term in office in January 2021, U.S. military standards in Afghanistan were reduced to a minimumof about 2,500. However, significant progress has been made in peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan Government. The agreement was reached in December 2020 on the basis that strong negotiations could continue, but no progress was made before President Trump left office.

On April 14, 2021, Biden announced his intention to withdraw all U.S. troops each September 11, 2021, a 20th anniversary of the attack on September 11 and four months after the deadline set for May 1, 2021. The day before the announcement, Biden called on former US presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama about his decision to withdraw. According to the plan, NATO troops will also follow the same timeline for withdrawal. The United States has indicated that some troops (the exact number has not been determined) will remain in the country to provide political security. On July 2, 2021, Germany and Italy withdrew their troops from Afghanistan. On the same day, the U.S. military left Bagram Airfield. Afghan officials complained that the Americans left without informing the new Afghan leader for more than two hours leaving the base. On July 8, 2021, President Biden announced that the official end of the war in Afghanistan would take place on August 31, 2021. On July 12, 2021, Austin S. Miller stepped down as US military and NATO commander in Afghanistan. On July 21, 2021, the US Air Force launched airstrikes against Taliban positions in Afghanistan. On August 17, 2021, President Biden held a media briefing in which he outlined the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.[3]

Process of Withdrawal

U.S. withdrawal actually started on 13 July 2011 when the first few hundred troops left Afghanistan during the administration of the Obama administration. On 18 April 2012, it was also decided to slow down the war in Afghanistan by gradually handing over the security control to the local Afghan forces. Same year both governments signed a strategic partnership agreement. Combatant withdrawal also took place under Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA). Mutual consents were built on several issues such as the U.S. pledged to support financially and tactically Afghanistan till the end of the process.

[3] *CNBC*, (2021), accessed on 8/17/202.1https://www.cnbc.com/2021/08/19/biden-says-aug-31-deadline-in-afghanistan-might-have-to-be-extended.html

Literature Review

Olson, B. (2013) in his article "Withdrawal from Empire: Britain's Decolonization of Egypt, Aden, and Kenya in the Mid-Twentieth Century" states that powerful states normally tend to embroil in the affairs of other states, comparatively weaker. On one hand, this study is useful to analyze the patterns of withdrawal of a superpower from its colonies but it less talks about the reasons of withdrawal. There is a need to identify the reasons of withdrawal.[4]

Krishnaiah, J. Signorielli, N. McLeod, D. M. (1993) in his article "The Evil Empire Revisited: New York Times Coverage of the Soviet Intervention in and Withdrawal from Afghanistan" explores the events published in a leading American newspaper. That actually set the frame of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan to analyze and cover the news items but its main focus is on image of Soviet ideology rather than the reasons of withdrawal. [5]

James, R. R. (2008) in his article "The Conservative Party and the Empire: A Pragmatic Withdrawal" describes the environment of colonial government and their reasons to enter into the territory of the occupied. Particularly the conservative party had set its milestones as a colonial power and remained for the longest period in history. But eventually, all the powers withdraw from their colonies the reasons behind this should have been discussed in a detailed manner but unfortunately this area has never been covered.[6]

In 2016 it was reported in the newspapers and media reports that most of the Afghan militant groups are enthusiastic to continue their fight against U.S. forces and they are more capable than before. Most of the facts regarding this news were over exaggerated. According to a PEW survey more than 50% of the population of United States is in favour of U.S. forces withdrawal from Afghanistan there are very few against it and very few that are neutral.[7]

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[4] Brian S. Olson, *Withdrawal from Empire: Britain's Decolonization of Egypt, Aden, and Kenya in the Mid-Twentieth Century*. (Army Command And General Staff Coll Fort Leavenworth Ks School Of Advanced Military Studies, 2008).

[5] Jothik Krishnaiah; Nancy Signorielli, and Douglas M. McLeod. "The evil empire revisited: New York Times coverage of the Soviet intervention in and withdrawal from Afghanistan." *Journalism Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1993): 647-655.

[6] Robert Rhodes James, "The conservative party and the empire: A pragmatic withdrawal." *The round table* 60, no. 240 (1970): 511-519.

[7] T. W. Green, and K Doherty, "*Majority of U.S. Public favors Afghanistan troop withdrawal: Biden criticized of his handling of situation*", (31 August, 2021). Retrieved fromhttps://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/08/31/majority-of-u-s-public-favors-afghanistan-troop-withdrawal-biden-criticized-for-his-handling-of-situation/

This withdrawal is proved to be very dynamic in nature. On one hand it releases the occupied state and end up the restoration of autonomy of the political setup of Afghan State. On the other hand, it leaves the country with the huge possibility of the structure of the Afghan government and possible renewal of civil war. Moreover, a large number of insurgent groups emerged and migration occurs. There is a possibility of reemergence of terrorist groups on U.S. soil due to migrations but Biden's administration tried to take precautionary measures in order to avoid this threat. Biden administration opted the best possible option for withdrawal that is to gain the confidence and support of Afghan public through the use of diplomacy and dialogues. This time U.S. particularly focused on the peaceful withdrawal and continuing peace process in Afghanistan that led to a gradual withdrawal.

But aforementioned study leaves some aspects untouched while analysing the situation. This withdrawal was not that gradual and timely as it could be. There is power vacuum left behind in the government. A speedy takeover of Taliban shows the incompetence and poor intelligence of U.S. forces and Biden administration in Afghanistan. After a long presence of two decades U.S. should have familiar with the strength of adversary particularly the nontraditional one i.e., Taliban. This is pointing towards the incompetence of U.S. forces that could be one of the reasons of withdrawal. United States has also failed to consult its partners like U.K. blamed it for not consulting them in Afghan matter. U.K. stated it as poor foreign policy measures of U.S. for its transatlantic partnership. Although U.S. and U.K. have a long history of cooperation of shared intelligence. After a long military presence and spending multi millions of dollars on war against terrorism in Afghanistan it looks absurd to withdraw without any success. Therefore, U.S. needed to make a reason for its own public consumption to justify this decision as a rational foreign policy choice. Joe Biden in a speech on national day said that as U.S. army was here to provide the peace and security from the belligerent groups but Afghan army and government is not only incapable but also unwilling to cooperate hence there is no point to stay more. He further explained that U.S. army should not stay and defend that country that is not capable to defend itself.

Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism explains and predict political phenomena ranging from short-term crisis-behavior, to foreign policy, to patterns of grand strategic adjustment by individual states up to long-term patterns of international outcomes and ultimately to the evolution of the structure of

international system itself[8].According to neoclassical realism, the size and goals of a nation's foreign policy are primarily determined by its relative material power. However, it argues that the influence of power capacities on foreign policy is indirect and nuanced since systemic pressures must be translated throughunit-level factors like decision-makers' perceptions and state structure[9].It proposes a shaky transmission line between structural incentives and restrictions on the one hand, and the actual diplomatic, military, foreign, and economic actions states choose on the other. Long-term outcomes in international politics typically reflect the actual power balance among the states. But based only on a systemic analysis, states rarely adopt short-term policies that are objectively effective or predictable.

Withdrawal of an empire or a superpower from the occupying state is a political process as well as a transition of power. One of the reasons behind is revolution, insurgency of civil war, and sometimes independence movements. This withdrawal occurs as a result of success of any of these. As neoclassical advocates the domestic elements as reasons of withdrawal. Reasons of incursion as well as reasons of decision of withdraw are very important to explore in the light of theories of international relations. Theory of neoclassical realism fits best in case of U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan after two decades of long presence. United States had no enduring reason to stay in Afghanistan. Military was just being installed to make its presence possible in China and Russia's neighbourhood. Although reason of U.S. presence in Afghanistan was fight against terrorist groups residing the country but in fact, they are international in character and have global networks. Therefore, only Afghanistan is not to be monitored like that. Neoclassical realism advocates the domestic politics and circumstances become the cause of U.S. withdrawal. U.S. presence made the insurgent groups angrier and they flourished and penetrated not only within Afghanistan but across the eastern border as well and this created the security issues in Pakistan. Internal strife of different groups in Afghanistan made U.S. withdrawal inevitable in other case a stable victory was impossible to achieve.

Reasons for U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan:

Though American withdrawal from Afghanistan was completed on 31st August 2021 which left researchers with many paradoxical reasons for hasty US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Ambassador Richard LeBaron rightly emphasized that by the time any serious issue is taken up to the US

[8]Ripsman, Norrin M., Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell. *Neoclassical realist theory of international politics*. (Oxford University Press, 2016).

[9] Gideon Rose, Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy, *World Politics* 51 (1) (1998): 144–172. doi:10.1017/S0043887100007814.

presidential house it has already become a matter of sorting out difficult choices with bad options at disposal of the administration.[10] All these choices at a crucial moment came up with uncertain outcomes. To understand the US withdrawal from Afghanistan it seemed crucial to understanding the pre-existing factors that shaped the situation, conditions, and choices that led to an abrupt geopolitical transition in the behavior of the US administration. Therefore, setting up "why" problems for analyzing the choices/decisions gets fascinating as all of a sudden researchers can find out that history could have taken a different turn with a choice. It's the things that didn't happen due to certain stumbling blocks or reasons that make it exciting to explore the things that happened in Afghanistan and led to an embarrassing withdrawal of another superpower.

End of Forever Wars or Realignment for the Continuation of Great Geopolitical Wars:

It seemed extremely important to explore the true rationals and perceptions behind the choices made by the world leaders. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan can be understood with the lens of internal factors in the USA like anti-war and anti-involvement movements that shaped the public opinion in favor of ending forever wars abroad.[11] The purpose of these movements is to build back better at home instead of draining US wealth and power in the far-flang areas of the world. The proponents of this motive emphasized that though after the attack of 9/11, there were strong emotions in the USA, and at that time they also reluctantly supported the attack and punishment for relevant organizers of the so-called terrorist attack on the twin towers but after the assassination of Osama Bin Laden and senior Al-Qaeda leaders with swift, decisive, and accurate intelligence and military operations they are now contented that they already fulfilled their desired mission in Afghanistan.[12] Therefore, some people in the upper echelons of the White House started to believe that the war on terror was over, and it was unwise for the United States to remain there. Moreover, there was a clear difference of opinion that was observed between the Republicans and the Democrats over the longest war of US history. Joe Biden as a Democrat President who got a thin majority and host of problems at disposal decided not to enlarge the gulf/crevices and opted for the end of the so-called "War on Terrorism". Thus, the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan was gradually molded in light of US public sentiments, a change of priorities, and the need for stabilizing internal power politics. On the flip side, critics suggest that US withdrawal from Afghanistan is the onset of a new realignment aimed at a transition or pause for recalibrating

[10] (William F. Wechsler 2021)
[11](Bansal 2021)
[12](Bansal 2021)

the supreme interests of the US in a competitive geopolitical environment. These critics underscore that open military intervention is no longer credible in a region that is the backyard of a major power like Russia or an emerging power like China. Joe Biden in his speech hinted towards the start of future wars. These future wars based on economy, resources, and artificial intelligence require the US to reassemble or restore its assets and wisely invest them in the quest of maintaining its reputation/ prestige as a superpower in the world.[13] So, this withdrawal is a pause in forever wars but the military, industrial and bureaucratic complexes of the US knew that their businesses prosper on wars so they may replace direct military intervention with other means such as a new race for armament as it already started under the new AUKUS military alliance that brought the indo-pacific on the brink of a new race for the development of nuclear submarines.[14] So, from this standpoint, the USA shifted its geopolitical strategy for the Asian region due to the structural changes in the balance of power in the international system. Thus, Afghanistan no longer remained the priority of the US administration as they decided to double the pressure on the eastern side of China instead of merely focusing on the western side. This rationale, therefore, led to the hasty withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan.

Continuation of Carrot Stick Policy:

After extended rounds of dialogue with Taliban leaders in Doha US administration gradually realized that they can influence and manipulate Afghanistan without their physical presence on the ground as the Taliban is yet again seeking an international de jure recognition as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.[15] Instead of using hard power against an unconventional enemy in difficult terrain, the Joe Biden administration decided to take refuge in soft power. Through this time-tested instrument, the US could use human rights and social issues for forcing the Taliban for coming to terms with US interests. [16]Thus, the US decided to withdraw from Afghanistan as a balanced blend of economic or diplomatic aid backed by sanctions will be sufficient to actively engage and pressurize the new Taliban government in Kabul. Moreover, Washington believed that in case of any mishap they can rely on their assets like shadow agents, proxies, and propaganda that can force the Taliban to abide by liberal international order.[17] As if they will be unwilling to come to terms with US aspirations then they will bleed more as their efforts aimed at much-needed de jure recognition and economic development will be significantly delayed. The

[13](Sheppard 2020)
[14](Pannett 2021)
[15] (William F. Wechsler 2021)
[16] (William F. Wechsler 2021)
[17](William F. Wechsler 2021)

persistent efforts of the Taliban for reconstructing their global perception can easily trick them into the vicious cycle of the US carrot and stick policy. The critics of this approach to US withdrawal emphasized the Russian, Chinese and Pakistani tilt towards supporting the Taliban government in Afghanistan. They focus on the strategic needs of Pakistan for having a secure and stable friendly government in Kabul through which Pakistan can extend its trade to central Asia. China is also deeply interested in huge stockpiles of rare earth minerals found in Afghanistan[18]. Despite some economic and strategic interests, the extent to which these countries are willing to secure the Taliban from the manipulation of the USA remained rather ambiguous. It will be quite interesting to observe that how the USA will create a balance between aid and sanctions for controlling the Taliban in the presence of the friendly neighboring states.

Economic Burden or End of Nation Building Efforts:

The United States has spent more than $ 3 trillion on the so-called "War Against terrorism" in the last 20 years. Maintaining a level of fiscal and monetary control and sustainability in such an environment where the huge amount of resources were constantly drained out gradually became extremely difficult for subsequent US administration. Procurement retention has also been an important consideration. Earlier the entire US military base was located in Pakistan, and so Pakistan also benefited from this transactional relationship, but in the past five years, the relations between the US and Pakistan have not been positively progressing. Currently, the amount spent was around 45-50 Billion USD per year which was more than 100 Billion USD per year during the war. Spending so much money was not wise for US leaders and that is US administration decided to withdraw from Afghanistan.[19] On the flip side, the critics like Amer Zafar Durrani who worked closely with the Afghan government underscored that about 70 to 80% of all the money that the US poured in Afghanistan landed back in the western countries and USA under the disguise of security, advice, and lobbying by the Afghan government.[20] The corrupt elites of Afghanistan who robed off the wealth and resources of people also accumulated large reserves of their money in offshore safe heavens. So, realistically this war has not brought any significant economic damages to the USA as its economic backbone remained intact. The increase in the US deficits has little to do with the war in Afghanistan rather the main reason for economic losses is the competitive trade tussle between China and the USA that was

[18](Constable 2021)
[19]Scott Worden, Andrew Wilder, *11 Things to Know: Afghanistan on the Eve of Withdrawal*, (N.P 2021).
[20]https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7wA9x-k1oU (Hard Talk with Dr. MoeedPirzada, September 9, 2021)

started by the ex-president Donald Trump.[21] Thus, it would be flawed to relate that US withdrawal was driven by economic losses. These critics emphasize the different dynamics of US withdrawal from Afghanistan and believe that the grand strategy of nation-building in far-flung areas of the world failed in Afghanistan[22]. Therefore, the US decided to withdraw as its economic resources and aid remained unsuccessful in changing the norms and culture of Afghan society. Except for few circles of elites, people were unaffected by the US-led nation-building efforts and largely supported or paid taxes to the Taliban. Thus in a state of utter dismay USA decided to leave Afghanistan.

Foreign Policy Concerns:

The end of the war will give the United States permission to redirect its power to tackle new, more pressing challenges, one of the most important of which is "greater competition" with the stronger Beijing. As a major apartheid state, it threatened the United States technologically, militarily, and economically. The idea that the U.S. It needs to get out of the big Middle East to be free with the Indo-Pacific has a natural complaint. It's not new anymore. The Obama administration similarly justified his withdrawal from Iraq as part of the basis for a trip to Asia.

In practical terms, the withdrawal advocates offered three major ways to leave Afghanistan that would strengthen Washington in its strong rivalry with Beijing. It could free the military equipment currently held in Afghanistan, allowing them to be sent back to the Indo-Pacific Theater. It could liberate the political and economic barriers of top U.S. officials, allowing them to give China time and attention that is otherwise diverted by the Afghan quagmire.And in the end, it could save U.S. money, opening up billions of dollars in better funding to programs that improve America's position in its competition with China.[23]

Failure in Suppression of Information and Calls for Accountability:

The Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, since late 2017, started making open calls for probing in US actions that stood in contradiction with the UN charter and rejected the revival of block politics and zero-sum mentality amid propagating rules-based international order by the USA.[24] Russia restricted and despised the increasing presence and influence of US in the central Asia. The unwillingness of Russia for a long

[21](How China Won Trump's Trade War and Got Americans to Foot the Bill 2021)
[22](Horton 2021)
[23] *The Diplomat*, (2021), accessed on 8/6/2021 https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/can-americas-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-help-its-china-strategy/
[24](Corporation 2017)

presence of the USA also contributed to shaping the perceptions of leaders in Washington. Moreover, international media started exposing CIA black sites in Afghanistan where alleged crimes against humanity were carried out.[25] This oppression jeopardized the US mission and efforts amid eliminating terrorist groups, as victims started to support and joined the Taliban-led insurgency against foreign occupation. Afghanistan became another flashpoint where gross human rights violations and the killing of civilians in collateral damages demanded international probes. Thus, Joe Biden tried to amend the distorted image of the USA by deciding to withdraw from Afghanistan. Additionally, western scholars were extremely discontented with the false information disseminated by the US administration. This false information highlighted that the US had complete control over the reins of power in Afghanistan.[26] While in reality, the Taliban controlled more than half of Aghan territory, where they made the laws and received taxes as well. The suppression and manipulation of information on Afghanistan were no longer possible with the previous president Donald Trump openly criticizing the pentagon for its debacle in Afghanistan.[27] So, US president Joe Biden decided to withdraw from Afghanistan.

Odds with Pakistan:

Since the period of Trump US administration openly used and mentioned Pakistan for scapegoating on the issue of Afghanistan. The statements by the US government concerning the alleged sponsorship of terrorism by Pakistan started hurting the core interests of Pakistan amid at economic development, connectivity, and progress of the region.[28] Moreover, the closer cooperation between India and the US for real-time satellite imagery and technology transfer endangered the delicate balance of power in South Asia.[29] The US hinted that it would like close collaboration/partnership between India and the Kabul government that was negatively perceived by policymakers of Pakistan as it was likely to put them in a difficult place where two hostile governments were sitting on both sides of their borders.[30] So, Pakistan openly negated US aspirations in Afghanistan and refused to provide any airbases on US requests. Pakistan gradually moved towards the Chinese vision for the region that proved to be a big blowback for the US grand strategy in Afghanistan. The unwillingness of Pakistan for providing support for military solutions in Afghanistan changed the regional dynamics and perceptions in Washington. The direct

[25](Mayer 2007)
[26](Whitlock 2019)
[27](Kube 2017)
[28](RAZAQ 2021)
[29](Indian military to get access to US satellite data, agreement today 2020)
[30](Kaura 2017)

calls from Islamabad for meaningful dialogue or engagement with the Taliban and discontent over US allegations increased tensions for the US government, due to which Washington decided to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

Revival of Operational Realism and A Host of Miscalculations:

The US denied operational realism in Afghanistan for a very long time. It means understanding the limits of what can or cannot be achieved in a given space and time.[31] The realization that US presence cannot bring in any fundamental changes on the ground situation paved the path for US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Apart from this much-awaited confession and realization by US President Joe Biden the hasty withdrawal of the USA from Afghanistan seemed to be largely based on strategic miscalculations of the US government regarding the capability, influence, and will of the Kabul government for suppressing the insurgency of Taliban. The US failed in an appropriate estimation of the strengths of the Afghan military for preventing the fall of Kabul.[32] Washington believed that the fall of Kabul will take months and the Taliban will face a strong military trained by the USA and equipped with the latest weaponry. The US president Joe Biden publically stated that the fall of Kabul was not inevitable in the presence of a so-called central and democratic government backed by a strong military of international standard.[33] US policymakers either miscalculated or remained ignorant towards ground realities in Afghanistan. The irresponsible withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan immediately created a power vacuum that was exploited by the Taliban. The morale of Afghan forces declined and they started surrendering without any fight against the Taliban due to which the fall of Kabul became a matter of days instead of months.

COVID-19:

COVID has gripped the entire country and looks more contagious and deadly than in the previous round. Concerns over COVID deaths are second to none in the Taliban violence. But the impact on the overall economy and future lives will also be equally important. The condition of COVID is getting worse, with more than 96,000 current cases, according to the World Health Organization. Two major hospitals in Kabul have closed their doors to new patients due to a lack of beds and oxygen. Amid international withdrawal and deteriorating security conditions, this third wave of COVID will be even worse than the previous two. People who have left their homes inside are also rising due to conflict and drought, disrupting the government's ability to provide basic services. All of these health

[31] (William F. Wechsler 2021)
[32] (William F. Wechsler 2021)
[33](Joe Biden Says Kabul's Fall To Taliban "Not Inevitable" As Fighting Rages 2021)

problems and government inefficiencies in providing basic services have put America's finances in jeopardy. And that was the reason for the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Taliban Factor:

The assassination of civil society leaders and journalists and threats from the Taliban, the lack of government protection and general uncertainty about the future exacerbate the mental anguish of leaders who can leave and oppress those who want to stay. Leaders of civil society organizations emphasize that their priority is to achieve harmony and reduce violence in their communities and not just the conflicting issues of political power sharing at the national level. There is a great deal of interest in ensuring that any compromise with the Taliban in negotiations ensures that fundamental rights are not traded for temporary peace. In addition, the modern Taliban are determined to stamp out a terrorist organization and demand legal recognition. This is one of the main reasons for opening a political office in Doha-Qatar. Their participation in the peace process testifies to their desire for similar benefits. Moreover, today the Taliban is much stronger than the previous Taliban. The former Taliban lived on the contributions and support of Pakistan ISI, but today's Taliban have their own economy where they earn money through drug trafficking, taxes, fraud and other means. Their equipment, weapons and training have been improved. This was evident in the various Taliban attacks on American troops in Afghanistan over the past five years. In fact, because of such a catastrophe, the US will never dare to create chaos as it did in Vietnam and that is why respectful withdrawal was the only thing.[34]

Future Scenario of Afghanistan:

The future of Afghanistan does not present a gloomy picture on the basis of current developments. For the lasting peace to attain government has to address multiple issues including pervasive corruption, organized criminialitythat focuses onthe opium trade, violations of human rights, and the patron-client system that excludes most Afghans. All ethnic groups must be represented in government to bring the house in order. Then, the international community has to play its role in helping Afghanistan to stand on its own feet. As far as the regional dynamics are concerned China and Pakistan are very much interested to engage Afghanistan in development Projects generally and in CPEC particularly. So, the US withdrawal has also

[34] Amit Bansal, (2021),retrieved https://www.india.com/opinion/five-reasons-for-american-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-taliban-attack-us-troops-4894307/amp/#aoh=16302306744559&amp_ct=1630230706751&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&amp_tf=From%20%251%24s ,accessed on 8/15/2021.

given the opportunity to regional actors to invest in Afghanistan that will have multidimensional impact on its economy, politics and society. And on this road to economic growth Afghanistan will not remain a vulnerable country to be attacked anymore in the longer run.

Conclusion

Afghanistan is a country that is notoriously difficult to govern. Empire after kingdom, nations have failed to occupy and rule. First, because Afghanistan is located on a major international route between Iran, Central Asia, and India, it has been frequently attacked and resolved by multitudes of nations, many of whom are hostile to each other and to foreigners. Second, because of the frequent attacks and racial tensions in the area, its lawlessness leads to a situation where almost every house is built as a fortress. Third, Afghanistan's visible landscape makes victory and rule extremely difficult, furthering nationalism. This made Afghanistan known as the Graveyard of Empires. U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan does not mean withdrawal from the region. United States will definitely make sure its presence through civil and military aid if not in Afghanistan but may be in Pakistan to secure its national interests. In current times physical presence of an aggressor may not sustain particularly due to economic constraints.

U.S. withdrawal is ending an era of western presence but starting a new transnational threat, challenges as well as opportunities. Whatever the reasons are behind U.S. withdrawal one thing is very clear that U.S. has no other plan to counterterrorism. U.S. invaded Afghanistan due to being threatened by terrorists and now withdrawing with the statement that if they themselves are unable to protect their land we should leave them on their own.

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WAR ON TERROR AND THE UNITED STATES HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: AN INTERNATIONAL LAW PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The 9/11 attacks triggereda paradigm shift in the United States security policy, prioritizing to ensure homeland security and to fight against the terrorism in the new American strategy.The United States invasion of Afghanistan further ravaged the existing fragile state damaging the already crumbling socio-economic and human infrastructure. In addition, the spillover of war into Pakistan started a new era of instability and misery further complicating the socio-economic fabric of the country making it the most vulnerable to terrorism related incidents. The two decades prolonged conflict not only destroyed the economic, social, and political infrastructure in both states, meanwhile mass human rights violations have been committed by the coalition forces under the leadership ofthe United States. In this context, the present paper investigates human rights abuses through the prism of international human rights law. The study addresses the following questions. (a) To what extent the United States war against terror violates the international law of human rights, and how it helps Washington to reconsolidate the regional hegemony. (b) Whether the war on terror improve the situation of human rights or further aggravate the conditions of civilians in targeted states. The study underlines that the war on terror failed to meet the merit of the right to intervene for self-defense, yet the coalition forces deliberately assimilate the innocent civilians under the vagueanti-terror war rhetoric. In addition, the war serves the United States hegemonic interests in South Asia, as the American presence in Afghanistan and the Indo-United States strategic partnership brought serious geopolitical implications for China and Pakistan.

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Keywords: 9/11 Terror Attacks, United States, Human Rights Law, Anti-Terror War, Al-Qaeda, Afghanistan, Pakistan

1. Introduction

The day of September 11, 2001, brought about a paradigm shift in world history by demolishing the World Trade Center (WTC) towers and the subsequent death of 2996 individuals. A group of nineteen hijackers associated with Al-Qaeda, a global terrorist group hijacked the four transcontinental flights and smashed them into the WTC and Pentagon. Immediately, nobody claimed the responsibility for attacks, however the Bush Administration pointed Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden an ally of Taliban and stationed in Afghanistan a culprit of worst tragedy and announced to hit back hard.[1] President Bush addressed the American nation from the Oval office and proclaimed that "we will make no distinction between those who planned these acts and those who harbor them".[2] His statement was a reflection of firm resolve to fight against the menace of global terrorism.

Once the United States decided to chase the terrorists, Pakistan regained its geostrategic significance for successful American intervention in Afghanistan. To gain support from Pakistan, Washington applied coercive diplomacy, andon 12th September 2001,the director-general of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt. General Mahmood Ahmed called upon for a meeting with the Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. He put forward not other option to Pakistan except to align and support the United States invastion in Afghanistan.[3] The unfortunate approach is also confirmed by former President Pervez Musharraf. He stated that Armitage threaten Pakistan to bomb back into the Stone Age.[4] Pakistan has had limited choice in the emerging politico-security dynamics. So, to save the vital interests and ensure sovereignty and territorial integrity, Islamabad decided to work with the United States to dislodge the Taliban and al-Qaeda from Afghanistan.

The war against terrorism officially launched on October 7, 2001. The allied forces headed by the United States expelled the Taliban and Al-Qaeda from Kabul within a matter of days and installed a moderate government. But, the American war gave birth to a new era of wreckage and criminality in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan[5]. The war spilled over to Pakistan and

[1] 9-11 Commission, "*The 9/11 Commission Repor,"* (Washington: Government Printing Office, United States of America, 2004).
[2]BoobWoodward, "*Bush at War*," (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002)
[3]Owen Bennett Jones, "*Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*," (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002)
[4]Pervez Musharraf, "*In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*," (London: Simon & Schuster, 2006)
[5]*Enduring Freedom: Abuses by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan* . (Human Rights Watch, 2004)

cause huge human and infrastructure damage to the country.[6] So this protracted conflict requires an objective and critical investigation to define its legitimacy and the United States championship for the respect of human rights. The paper applies the international human rights law as a framework to investigate the legitimacy of the American intervention in Afghanistan, and subsequent war crimes and human rights abuses. The paper uses a qualitative research approach and is supported by the data gathered from different primary and secondary sources. It is tailored as followed. After introduction, legal framework has been developed to frame the United States intervention in Afghanistan, followed by the separate sections on Afghanistan and Pakistan. The section conclude the study.

2. Legal Debate on the War on Terror

Less than two weeks after the 9/11 mayhem, President Bush woved to eliminate and defeat al-Qaeda and its allies. The 2002 National Security Strategy document outlines the specific objectives of the United States war on terrorism including; preventing terrorist acts, eliminating distinct terrorist organisations, and reducing the circumstances that encourage terrorism by advancing democracy and human rights.[7] Washington portrayed the inherent right of self-defense endorsed by the United Nations Charter to wage a war in Afghanistan.The article gives an authority to intervene to eliminate the threat or the use of force. Yet, article 2(4) of the UN Charter forbids the "threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state"[8]. The member states can only use force when the UNSC authorizes it under article 51 of the charter.However, the United Nations can propose various peaceful means to resolve the conflict before permitting a direct intervention.

Article 33 of Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter laid the guiding principles for member states to resolve disputes through investigation, judicial settlement, mediation, negotiation, arbitration, reconciliation and involvement of regional organizations and arrangements, or activating other peaceful means to settle the disputes.[9] The Security Council may also inquire any dispute which endangers international peace and security and

[6]Nadia Mushtaq Abbasi, "Impact of Terrorism on Pakistan," *Strategic Studies* 33, no. 2 (2013): 33-68.

[7] Erik W. Goepner, "Measuring the Effectiveness of America's War on Terror," *Parameters* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2016).

[8] "*Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice*," (San Francisco: United Nations, 1945).

[9] Ibid

offer its arbitrary services to settle the dispute. If a UN member state comes under the foreign attack, peaceful measures can not replace the inherent right of self defence granted to individuals and groups of individuals. But the member states are required to inform the United Nations Security Council about their actions and do not infringe the authority and responsibility of the UNSC.[10]

In case of United States and its allies, invasion and bombing in Afghanistan was patently illegal and was not mandated by the Security Council. Marjorie Cohn, a California based law practitioner argued that attack on Afghanistan was illegal and criminal actfor two reasons because it failed to qualify under article 51. First, rather than being a "armed strike" by another state, the attacks in New York and Washington, DC, were criminal in nature. Second, following the September 11, the United States wouldn't even have delayed 3 weeks to begin its airstrikes if there had been an immediate threat of a military strike against it.[11]

No military intervention could represent self-defense, even when a state had carried out the 9/11 attacks; the need for self-defense must be immediate, overpowering, leaving no choice of means, and no opportunity for deliberation.[12] As a guarranor and guardian of international peace and order, it was the responsibility of the Security Council to evaluate the intensity of the threat to the United States. The UN can propose the United States to sue Afghanistan in the Internatioal Court of Jistice for sheltering and supporting Al-Qaeda to attack on the WTC and seek immediate arrests of culprits. It can suggest the member states to terminate air, postal, sea, telegraphic, radio, economic and other modes of communication with Afghanistan. The UN have had the authority to establish a tribunal for justice, as well as to establish a special UN force to prevent attacks, arrest culprits and prevent further attacks on the United States. if measures provided under 'Article 41' are inadequate or insufficient, the UNSC is entitled to take action by sea, air,and land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.[13]

[10] "Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression (Article 39-51)," United Nations, Available at: https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-7

[11] Rabia Khan, "Was the NATO Invasion of Afghanistan Legal?,"*E-IR.* November 6, 2013, Available at: http://www.e-ir.info/2013/11/06/was-the-nato-invasion-of-afghanistan-legal/.

[12] Professor Majorie Cohn, "Bombing *of Afghanistan is Illegal and Must be Stopped*," (Jurist. Org. November 6, 2001), Available at: http://www.jurist.org/forum/forumnew36.htm

[13] *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice,*

International humanitarian law is a field that protects the rights of civilians in an armed conflict. Henry Dunant's pioneer work in 1864 laid the foundations of international humanitarian law. The terrible brutality of the battle of Solferino urged the civilized nations to adopt the "Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the field". The St. Petersburg declaration of 1868 prohibited the small explosive or incendiary projectiles.[14]Further more the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 prohibited the use of force against villages and towns. The Four Geneva 'Red Cross' Conventions of 1949 replaced the earlier arrangements and introduced the new rules for the treatment of prisoners, wounded, sick and civilians in wartime.The Geneva Conventions framework is based on the idea that people who aren't fighting must be handled with humanity.[15]

The fourth Geneva Convention set the rules for the protection of civilians in war time. According to Protocol I, 1977, Article 51(1) a civilian is defined as a person not involved in a combat or fight. Furthermore, the convetion ensure the safety of civilians through dignity and respect for honor, religious practices,convictions, and prohibition of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment, hostage-taking and reprisals.[16]Article 43 of the Hague Regulations ensuresthe protection of inhabitants of the occupied territory against acts of violence, and not to tolerate such violence by any third state. International law prohibits taking legitimate military actions if the collateral civilian casualties disproportionate to the specific military gain from the attack. Article 51 of the Convention prohibits the attack on the civilian population, as well as non-combatant individuals. Additionally, indiscriminate attacks are forbidden.

Following the September 11 attacks, the United States approached the Security Council on two occasions, and the Security Council passed two resolutions; 1368 and 1373, neither of the resolutions authorizes the use of force or the intervention. However, the resolutions condemned the 9/11 attacks, freezed the assets of Afghanistan, established the mechanism to deter terrorist attacks, urged to share necessary information, emphasized to

[14] "Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles Under 400 Grammes Weight. Saint Petersburg, 29 November/11 December 1868," (International Committee of the Red Cross, December 1868), Accessed May 9, 2020, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/full/declaration1868

[15] "*The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols*," (International Committee of the Red Cross, January 1, 2014), Accessed May 11, 2020, https://www.icrc.org/en/document/geneva-conventions-1949-additional-protocols

[16]Malcolm N. Shaw, *International Law*.(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

ratify and enformce global conventions to eliminate terrorism.[17]But despite the warnings given by the UNSC and various international law instruments, the United States war on terrorism is an overt violation of the sovereignty of states and international humanitarian law. The United States intervention deprived the civilians from their homes, and belonging, increased insecurity and hardships. The protracted conflict not only destabilizes Afghanistan and Pakistan, meanwhile the chaos consumed thousands of innocent civilians in both states, destabilizes the political system, damaged education, health, and social infrastructure.

3. United States War on Terror in Afghanistan

On October 9, 2001, the United States launched the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) along with the United Kingdom and the Afghan United Front forces. After a brief period of corporate bombing, teams from the CIA's special Activities Division (SAD) were the first to land in Afganistan, later reinforced by the 5th Special Forces Group, USSOCOM units, British Special Forces and Northern Alliance militants. The massive air power ousted the Taliban regime from power and most of Afghanistan in a matter of weeks, and only after 62 days of conflict Washington declared victory over Afghanistan.[18]

The invasion of Afghanistan by the United States in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks was justified on the basis of national security and the defence of basic liberties. But as part of its continuous security and intelligence missions, Washington was operating a system of arbitrary arrests and detentions that willfully floutes international human rights law and international humanitarian law.[19] A report by Human Rights Watch published in 2004 exposed that the United States forces are operating in a climate of almost total impunity, and the military personnel are involved in numerous abuses including the arbitrary and indefinite dentention; cases of excessive force during arrests; and mistreatment of detainees. From 2002 to 2004 more than one thousand Afghan and other nationals have been arrested by the NATO forces in Afghanistan and were miserably mistreated in detention.[20]

[17]Cohn, *"Bombing of Afghanistan is Illegal and Must be Stopped"*
[18]Mason, Thoma H Johnson and Chris Mason, "*Terrorism, Insurgency, and Afghanistan,"* (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, National Security Affairs Department, 2007).
[19] "The Cost of War: Afghan Experienes of Conflict, 1978-2009," (*CDN*, *Oxfam*, November 2009), available at https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/afghanistan-the-cost-of-war_14.pdf
[20] "Enduring Freedom: Abuses by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan", *Human Rights Watch*, 16, no. 3(C), (March 2004)

It is a matter of grave concern that the United States and NATO forces killed thousands of Afghan civilians in air and ground attacks because in the early years the mechanism to count civilian causalities was absent.[21]The coalition forces were counting the dead soldiers on their side, whereas intentionally ignoring the numbers of deal civilians in Afghanistan. To count the bodies, two methods are widely used. One isa passive method that includes reports from media, police, or hospital announcements, and it captures a fraction of those killed. On the other hand, an active method is more accurate which is based on local polls data, but it is quite difficult to implement in a war-ravaged country like Afghanistan. Thus, the longest war of NATO in Afghanistan only counts deaths through the passive method, and this means numbers circulating in media are too low, and actual causalities can be manifold.[22]

The United States invasionof Afghanistan failed to bring peace, security, and economic development but increased the intensity of war and the plight of Afghan people. The data disclosed that countries the United States attacked had 143 more terror attacks per year than countries the United States did not invade.[23] Similarly, countries, where it conducted drone strikes, were home to 395 more attacks per year than those where it did not. The media reports revealed that the United States soldiers are blatantly involved in civilian killings. For instance, "SPIEGEL" published a story posing the United States soldiers with their civilian victims. It was pointed out that the soldiers involved in civilian killing called themselves "kill team".[24] Similarly, in a February 2010 incident,theUnited States and Afghan forces killed five civilians including two pregnant women and a teenage girl, and wounded several others.[25]In another incident, on October 3, 2015, coalition forces attacked a hospital in Kunduz province killing 22

[21] "Civilian Harm Tracking: Analysis of ISAF Efforts in Afghanistan", (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2014)

[22]Luhr Henken, "*Body Count-Number of Victims after 12 Years of the "War on Terror" in Afghanistan and Pakistan*," (Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), March 2015)

[23] "*Saving Ourselves: Security Transition and Impact on Civilian Protection in Afghanistan*," (Center for Civilians in Conflict, Recognize, Prevent, Protect, Amend, November 21, 2016), Available at: https://civiliansinconflict.org/publications/research/saving-security-transition-impact-civilian-protection-afghanistan/

[24] Jurgen Dahlkamp and Susanne Koelbl, "*Afghanistan's Human Rights Disaster*," (SPIEGEL International, March 27, 2006), Available at: https://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/worlds-colliding-afghanistan-s-human-rights-disaster-a-408103.html

[25] Neeta C. Crawford, "*Civilian Death and Injury in Afghanistan, 2001-2011,"* (Boston University , 2011)

peoples and injuring thirty-seven. It was a grave violation of the Geneva Conventions, which imposes restrictions on states to protect hospitals, injured, and civilians. The MSF had already provided its exact GPS coordinates to the United States forces on multiple occasions.[26]

The coalition forces in Afghanistan also used white phosphorous to kill Afghan civilians. White phosphorous can be used to light a target, light up the night sky, or create smokescreens, however using it as a weapon is prohibited under international law. In 2009, the United States forces conducted an airstrike in a village of Farah province and allegedly usedthe white phosphorous.[27]The doctors identified terrible burns on the victims which they have never seen before.[28]The United StatesArmy denied using white phosphorous bombs in an Afghan airstrike but Marc Garlasco, a senior military analyst at Human Rights Watch and a former senior Pentagon analyst reportedly saidthe coalition forces have been using white phosphorous regularly in Afghanistan, and theformer Afghan president Hamid Karzai hadconfirmed the killingof at least 125 to 130 civilians in the white phosphorous attacks.[29]

3.1 Civilian Fatalities

Afghanistan has suffered widespread human rights violations since the beginning of the anti-terrorism war started in 2001.It intensified the hardships and plights of Afghan nationals and have considerable negative impacts on their physical and psychological life. The American assault forcedthe seven million Afghans to migrate internally or neighboring Iran and Pakistan. The ill-coordinated and careless American air assault killed thousands of Afghan civilians and the lack of sensitivity by the United States troops to local perceptions, laws, and customs disenchanted the locals.[30] Local Newspapers reported that during sweeps of Afghan villages searching for weapons and members of anti-American forces, the United States Special

[26]Majorie Cohn, "The Kunduz Hospital Bombing," *Telesur*. October 13, 2015, Available at: https://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/The-Kunduz-Hospital-Bombing-20151013-0018.html

[27] "Afghanistan", *International Center for Transitional Justice*, Available at: https://www.ictj.org/location/afghanistan

[28] "*They Burn Through Everything: The Human Cost of Incendiary Weapons and the Limits of International Law,"*(Human Rights Watch, November 9, 2020), Available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/11/09/they-burn-through-everything/human-cost-incendiary-weapons-and-limits

[29]Subhabrata Das, "Did US army use white phosphorous in recent Afghan war," *Digital Journal*, (May 11, 2009), Available at: http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/272452

[30] Dylan Matthews, "*20 years, $6 trillion, 900,000 lives,"* (September 11, 2021), Available at: https://www.vox.com/22654167/cost-deaths-war-on-terror-afghanistan-iraq-911

Forces have physically abused villagers, damaged personal property, and subjected women to body searches, a major affront on a family honor.[31]

The war on terrorism in Afghanistan consumed enormous human lives and destroyed the health, education, and communication infrastructure. Over the past 20 years, approximately 111,000 peoples have been killed and more than 116,000 individuals have been injured in the war in Afghanistan.[32] Despite the huge human and economic sacrifices, the security situation has been weakened in Afghanistan, especially in the South, near the border with Pakistan. The Afghan government in Kabul is controlling 60 percent of the territory and the remaining is ruled by the anti-government forces, such as the Taliban and the warlords. The United Nations Office for the Coordination on Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that from January 1stto April 30th, 2016 approximately 117,976 peoples were newly displaced from 24 out of 34 provinces.[33]

More than 31,000 civilians have been harmed as a result of indirect warfare in Afghanistan since October 7, 2001. But given that there were lengthy periods during the conflict when civilian casualties from fighting were either undercounted or not counted at all, this figure is unavoidably an estimate. The Civilian Causality Cell, established by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2008, evolved into the Civilian Casualty Mitigation Team in 2011.[34] A database of civilian deaths and injuries has also been created by ISAF, although it is not accessible to the general public. Only soldiers and commanders have access to it, allowing them to gain knowledge from events where people were harmed.

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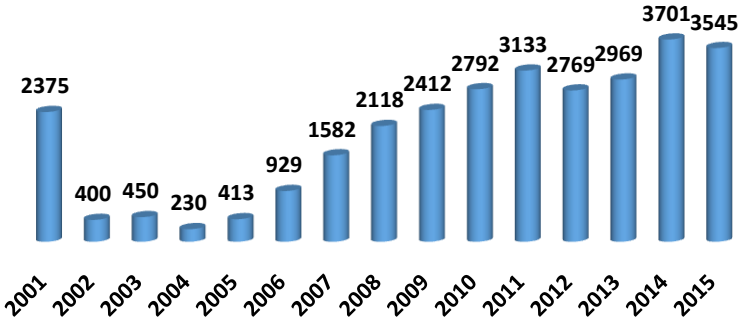
[31] Jonathan Horowitz, 'Human Rights as a Weapon of War', in Beth Bailey and Richard H. Immerman (ed), "*Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan*," (New York: New York University Press, 2015)

[32]Meg Cramer, "Mass *Murder in Afghanistan: 40 Years of Conflict*," (The Institute of World Politics, 2020)

[33] "Afghanistan: Conflict Induced Displacements," *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (OCH, May 15, 2016), Available at: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/afg_conflict_idps_2016_jan_apr_s

[34] "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress," *United States Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction* (SIGAR, July 30, 2016), Available at: https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2016-04-30qr.pdf

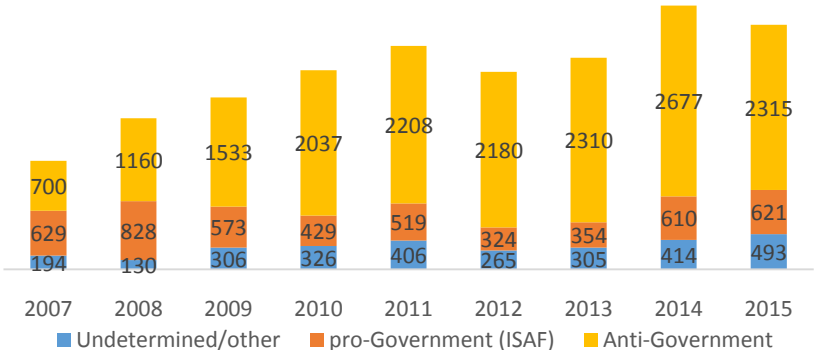
Fig- 1 Number of Civilians Killed in Afghanistan from 2001 to through 2015



Source:*Neeta C. Crawford*

In 2007, UNAMA reported that pro-government forces have killed 41 percent of civilians indirect violence; that percentage dropped to a low of 12 percent in 2012 and 2013, but later that trend has been reversed. In 2014 and 2015, pro-government forces including ISAF killed 16 and 18 percent of Afghan civilians respectively. Additionally, as the battle grew more intense, it became more difficult for UNAMA to identify the perpetrators of the confirmed civilian deaths. In 2015, UNAMA was unable to assign responsibility for 14% of all civilian fatalities.[35]

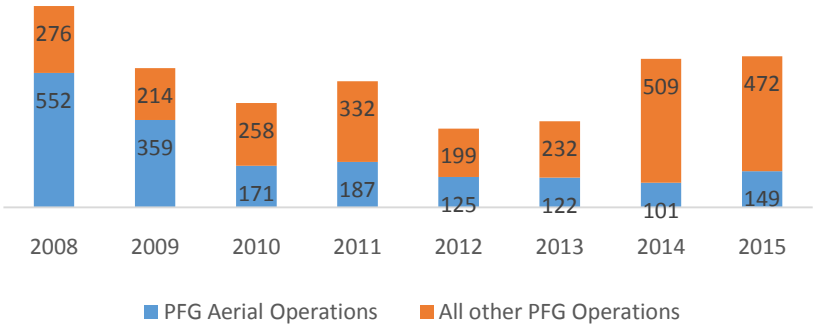
Fig-2 UNAMA Attribution of Civilian Deaths from 2007-2015



[35] "Afghanistan Annual Report 2015: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict," United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, February 2016, Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports

The figure-2 elucidates the Afghan civilian deaths in protracted war from 2007 to 2015. It explains that anti-government forces caused more civilian deaths but pro-government forces are also involved in civilian cleansing.[36] The figure discloses that anti-government groups killed 17,120 civilians, whereas pro-government forces including ISAF killed 4,887 Afghans in total.

Fig-3 Civilian Deaths in Aerial and all other Pro-Government Operations



Source:*Neeta C. Crawford*

Figure-3 explains the civilian deaths in pro-government Arial and other operations. It examined that since 2008 war intensified in Afghanistan and the government forces had starkly increased the Arial and ground operations. The counter-insurgency operations are seriously harming the civilians and 4,258 civilians have been killed in pro-government forces operations.[37]

According to an ICRC poll, almost all Afghans (96%) have experienced direct or indirect effects from combat since 2009; nearly half (45%) have experienced a family member's death and a third (35%) have sustained injuries during the fighting. According to UNAMA's annual statistics, the number of civilian deaths increased by 40% in 2008 compared to the year before; 55% of these deaths were ascribed to armed opposition forces, and 39% to forces supporting the government.Similar to this, around 90 civilians,

[36] "Casualty Figures after 10 Years of the War on Terror: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan," *Body Count Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)*, (March 2015)

[37] Neeta C. Crawford, "*War Related Death, Injury and Displacement in Afghanistan and Pakstan 2001-2014," Watson Institute Brown University, (May 22, 2015)*

mostly women and children, were murdered in an airstrike in August 2008 in Shindand, southern Herat.[38]

3.2 Afghan Civilian Injuries and Displacement

In the fight against terrorism, more than 40,000 Afghan civilians have suffered significant injuries. Since January 2009, UNAMA has recorded over 40,900 civilian injuries in Afghanistan, and some victims have had significant traumatic amputations. [39] In 2015, the International Committee of the Red Cross registered 9,200 new patients, among them 1,261 were amputees. Well over 1,600 persons suffering spinal injuries received assistance from the Red Cross in 2015.[40]Similarl to this, more than 7,000 new patients were treated by the Handicap International in 2015. Of those, about 20 percent had lower limb amputations caused byimprovised explosive devicies, land mines, and other weapons.[41]The persistent war and lack of development have turned Afghanistan into one of the poorest countries in the world. The concerns of insecurity and vulnerability affect a large part of the country, leading to massive displacement and a lack of humanitarian access. In the past 10 years, over 4.7 million refugees have returned, but3-4 million refugees are still residing in neighboring Iran and Pakistan.[42]

4 War on Terrorism in Pakistan

Soon after the American assault in Afghanistan, remnants of al-Qaeda, Taliban, and other transcontinental terrorist groups slipped into the northwestern region of Pakistan. The porous border between the two countries was almost unruly, which facilitated the terrorists to cross over into Federally Administer Tribal Areas (FATA) and merging with the local tribes. [43] In the meanwhile, Washington pressured Pakistan to mount a

[38] Norah Niland, "Civilian Casualities in Afghanistan: Evidence-based advocay and enhanced protection," *Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN),* (February 2011)
[39] UNAMA, "*Afghanistan Annual Report 2015: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict"*
[40]ICRC. "Afghanistan: Thousands received life-saving assistance in 2015," *International Committee of the Red Cross.* January 30, 2016, Available at: https://www.icrc.org/
[41]"Afghanistan: Helping Victims of Weapons and IEDs," *Handicap International.* 2016, Available at: http://www.handicap-international.us
[42] David Vine, Cala Coffman, KatalinaKhoury, Madison Lovasz, Helen Bush, Rachael Leduc, and Jennifer Walkup, "Creating Refugees: Displacement Caused by the United States Post-9/11 Wars," Watson Institute Brown University, September 21, 2021, Available at: https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2020/Displacement_Vine%20et%20al_Costs%20of%20War%202020%2009%2008.pdf
[43]Masood Ur Rehman Khattak and Muhammad Mushtaq, "Pakistan's Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2001-2014): An Analysis," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* XXXVI, no. 1 (2015)

counter-terrorism operation in FATA. Consequently, Pakistan started a counter-terror war on its soil, and hundreds of militants linked with al-Qaeda and other organizations were captured and killed by the security forces.

The war in Afghanistan compelled Pakistan to step forward with stringent measures to fight against terrorism. After sixty years of its existence, in 2001 Pakistani regular army entered into FATA area for the first time to eliminate the presence of terrorists. However, Pakistan reached a peace agreement with tribal chief Nek Muhammad in 2004 that was later sabotaged by an American drone strike because Washington thought Nek Muhammad was responsible for attacks on NATO forces in Afghanistan. As a result of the drone strike, which harmed relations between the army and the local tribes, the army eventually began counter terrorism operations under new code names throughout the whole FATA region. For instance; operation Zalzala (Earthquake), operation-Sher-Dil in Bajur Agency, operation Daraghalam (Here I Come) in Khyber Agency, and operation Al-Mizan during President Pervez Musharraf's regime. Later the incumbent government of the Pakistan People's Party launched two major operations namely Rah-I-Raast in Swat and Malakand regions and operation Rah-I-Nijaat in South Waziristan Agency in 2009.[44]But, the successive civilian government transferred powers to make decisions for military operations to Army Chief General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani, who delayed the operation for four years which caused huge human and economic destruction to Pakistan. But the government of PML-N began a major offensive code-named Operation Zarb-e-Azab on June 15, 2014, to expel the terrorists from North Waziristan Agency. By 2003, the Pakistani army had been instrumental in the fight against terrorism and had managed to apprehend more than 400 notable al-Qaeda members from FATA and the 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Muhammad from Rawalpindi.[45]

The so-called war against terrorism was not without any pitfalls, contrary it destroyed the socio-economic and human infrastructure of the country. Since 2001, Pakistan has sustained almost 62,000 lives and an additional 67,000 injuries.[46] Due to military operations in the tribal belt,

[44]Iram Khalid and Muhammad Iqbal Roy, "Pakistan's Military Operations: The Counter Terrorism Strategy (2001-2013) Prospects and Implications," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 53, no. 2 (July-December 2016)

[45]Peter L. Bergen, "*The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al-Qaeda's Leader,"* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006)

[46] Neta C. Crawford, "Human Cost of the Post-9/11 War: Lethality and the Need for Transparency," Watson Institute Brown University, November 2018, Available at:

about three million Pakistani nationals were internally displaced and the operation destroyed their homes, schools, roads, health and sanitation facilities. Education and health are the most affected sectors due to the ongoing war on terror. Around 120 girls are killed and 80 different schools are demolished by the terrorists in Swat Valley alone. From 2001 to 2009, military operations endured an aggregate loss of $45 billion to Pakistan and an estimated $70 billion till 2012.[47] As a result of counter-terrorism operations, a new wave of the lethal insurgency had started which rapidly expanded its orbit across the state, and the terrorists started attacking every major public and government installation. For instance,on December 14,2014,Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan terrorists attacked an Army Public School in Peshawar massacring 141individuals including 132 school-going children. The spokesperson of the Taliban told BBC Urdu media service that the attack was a retaliatory response to military operations in the FATA area and we will hit back the military hard for its operations.[48]

4.1 Drone Attacks

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), generally known as Drones are the most effective and destructive weapons of America in the 21st century. The New York Times reported in 2011 that Pentagon has requested around $5 billion dollars from the Congress to add more drones in its available 7,000 capacity.[49] But, many experts in international law areraisingtheillegitimacy of drone attacks. For instance, Sarwar opined "This is per se illegal unless it is proved that the state is supporting or encouraging the militants".Therefore, after mounting criticism in 2010, for the first time the United States took a legal position by saying that Washington is atthe war against al-Qaeda, Taliban, and other militant groups and using drones for self-defense, complying with the laws of war, killing those who pose an imminent threat and not launching an attack on civilians.[50]But still, many opponents are skeptical about the legal status of drones because the drone attacks are a clear violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity which is a

https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2018/Human%20Costs%2C%20Nov%208%202018%20CoW.pdf

[47] Ibid

[48]"Pakistan Taliban: Peshawar School Attack Leaves 141 Dead," *BBC News,* December 16, 2014, Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-30491435

[49]"Predator Drones and Unmanned Aeriel Vehicles (UAVs)," *The New York Times.* October 21, 2011, Available at: http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/u/unmanned_aerial_vehicles/index.html

[50]Ari Shapiro "US Drone Strikes are Justified, Legal Advisor Says," *National Public Radio,* March 26, 2010, Available at: https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125206000

universal law, and the drones have killed more civilians than militants a crime against humanity.

Washington is deliberately using drones to kill terrorists in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and some other countries. On the one hand,United States designated Pakistana key non-NATO ally in the war on terror, on the other hand,Washington persistently violated its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter states "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations"[51] but Washingtonis maximizing its security at the expense of Pakistan. Thus, under the UN Charter, Rome Statute of International Criminal Court, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949drone attacks are illegal and cannot be granted legitimacy.

Table-4 Total Fatalities and Injuries in US Drone Strikes in Pakistan from 2004-2018

Year	Drone Strikes	Min Killed	Max Killed	Min Injured	Max Injured
2004	1	6	8	1	1
2005	3	16	16	1	1
2006	2	94	105	3	3
2007	5	36	56	20	37
2008	38	252	401	146	228
2009	54	471	753	266	404
2010	128	755	1,108	351	428
2011	75	362	666	158	236
2012	50	212	410	100	212

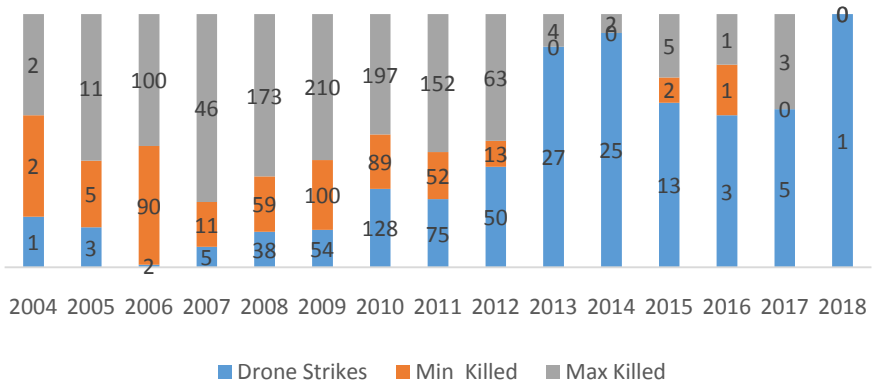
[51] "*Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice"*

2013	27	109	195	43	89
2014	25	115	186	44	67
2015	13	60	85	25	32
2016	3	11	12	3	6
2017	5	15	22	1	5
2018	1	1	3	0	0
Total	**430**	**2515**	**4026**	**1162**	**1749**

Data Sources:*The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*

In 2004, the United States fired the first drone in Pakistan andsince then it has been pervasively increasing the intensity of drones in Pakistan. Table-4 discloses that the Obama presidency used drones as a lethal weapon to kill terrorists and increased the frequency of drone warfare in Pakistan. By 2018, 430 drone attacks are reported in Pakistan with maximum deaths of 4026 and 1749 injuries respectively.[52]

Fig-5 Civilians Killed in US Drone Attacks



Data Sources: *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*

[52] "Drone Strikes in Pakistan," *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, Available at: https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/projects/drone-war/pakistan

Fig-6 Children Killed in US Drone Attacks

Year	Drone Strikes	Min Killed	Max Killed
2004	1	2	2
2005	3	4	5
2006	2	73	76
2007	5	1	1
2008	38	26	45
2009	54	36	39
2010	128	23	23
2011	75	6	11
2012	50	1	2
2013	27	0	1
2014	25	0	2
2015	13	0	0
2016	3	0	0
2017	5	0	0
2018	1	0	0
Total	**430**	**172**	**207**

Data Sources:*The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*

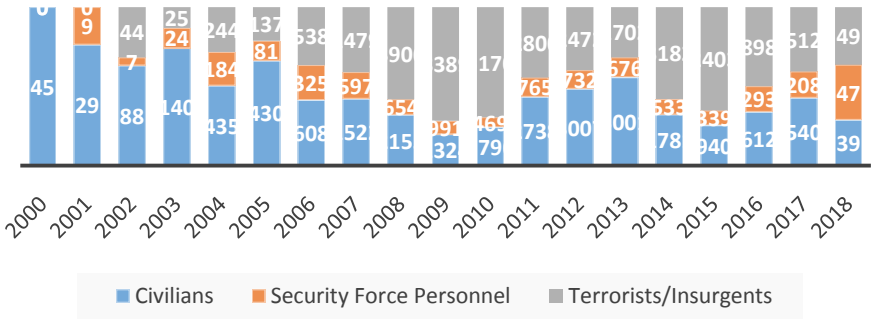
Besides, terrorists, innocent civilians, and children are also subject to illegaldrone warfare in Pakistan. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism reported 172 minimum and 207 maximum children being killed in drone

attacks. Similarly, figure-5 exposes that 424 minimum numbers and 969 maximum numbers of civilians being killed in drone attacks. Some 24 men were specifically targeted in Pakistan resulting in the death of 874 peoples. Washington made multiple abortive attempts to kill major figures of various terrorist groups, but in the course of pursuing those 24 men, it has killed 142 children.[53] Gram reported that only one was identified as a terrorist in 49 individuals killed in the United States drone strikes.[54]

4.2 Damage to Health, Economy, and Education

Pakistan is a major victim of the war on terror, as it has destroyed the unity of the nation, caused heavy damage to national assets, and loss of valuable lives. The education sector is severely damaged in war-ravaged areas. Government data show that only 17% of people in FATA are literate, and terrorists have devastated what little infrastructure there is in the tribal areas. About 188 girls' schools and 97 boys' schools have been destroyed by the terrorists in Swat alone, and pupils are frequently prevented from attending school because to fear of terrorism.Similar to this, many individuals left their homes and sought sanctuary in the nearby areas after the military operations against the extremists. 1.9 million internally displaced people (IDPs) have been registered by the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA), with KPK accounting for 96% of these IDPs.[55]

Fig-7 Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan from 2000-2018



Source:*South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)*

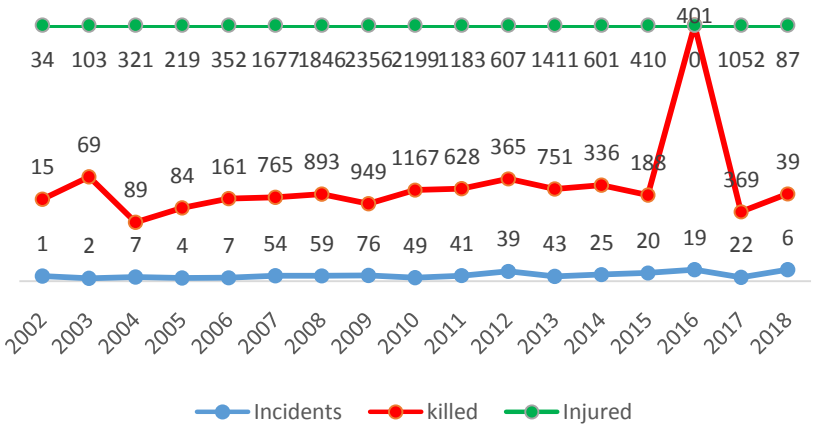
[53]Spencer Ackerman, "41 men targted but 1,147 people killed: US drone strikes-the facts on the ground," *The Guardian.* November 24, 2014, Available at:https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/24/-sp-us-drone-strikes-kill-1147

[54]Danielle Gram, "Drone Strikes in Pakistan kill one terrorist for every 50 deaths," *MIC.Com.* September 26, 2012, Available at: https://mic.com/articles/15340/drone-strikes-in-pakistan-kill-one-terrorist-for-every-50-deaths

[55]Manzoor Ahmad, "Implications of the War on Terror for Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan," *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, (2010)

The war on terror cost Pakistan huge human and economic loss. Pakistan lost nearly 6,934 security forces personnel and 22,230 civilians in terrorism calamity. The cost of fighting the insurgency financially is already having an impact. More money, weaponry, and equipment are needed because the defence budget has been increased by more than 35%. Pakistan has reportedly lost over $120 billion as a result of being a front-line state in the war against terrorism, according to some estimates.[56]

Fig-8 Suicide Attacks in Pakistan from 2002-2018



Source:*South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)*

The counter-insurgency wargives rise to a new phenomenon called suicide attacks. The terrorists launched massive suicide strikes on public places, government, and military installations, which paralyzed the life of the country. Though in initial years lethality was moderate, however since 2007 the attacks intensified with 54 attacks and killing of 765 peoples annually. Similarly, since 2002, Pakistan lost 7,269 peoples in suicide attacks and bear an economic loss of billionsof dollars.[57]The war on terror restricted the social life of the general masses and increased the sense of insecurity which further led the country towards a security state. Yet, in recent years, Pakistan regained stability and social, political, and economic life come to normalcy.

[56]Talat Masood, "Pakistan's Fight Against Terrorism," *Defense Against Terrorism Review* 4, no. 1 (Spring & Fall 2012)

[57]MoonisAhmer, "The Impact of the War Against Terror on Pakistan," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 35 no. 1, (Fall 2021): 63-79

5 Conclusion

The September 11, 2001 terror attacks transformed the foreign policy course of the United States and the fight against terrorism gained new momentum in the foreign policy of President Bush. Afghanistan became the first victim of American retaliatory assault which further pushed the country into chaos and anarchy. America attacked Afghanistan in the name of self-defense and humanitarian crisis, but both claims lack legal support from the United Nations and the international law which raised questions for the legal status of American intervention. Similarly, the ongoing war on terror killed thousands of innocent civilians which is a serious war crime and crime against humanity. Both pro-government and anti-government forces are maiming the civilians and spreading further terror in the name of an anti-terror war. The United Stateshas killed thousands of innocent civilians in drone strikes which is another dark side of the American anti-terror war. The in-depth analysis of available literature and data sources on thewar on terror revealed that the American war is lacking the legal grounds and spreading terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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